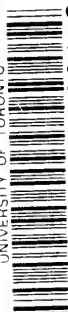


LANGUAGE

AND

LANGUAGES

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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CANON FARRAR

Cambridge - Local Examinations

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Presented by the Committee  
for the improvement of  
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to Arthur A. Norwood  
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in the Examinations held in Dec<sup>r</sup> 1877



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LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES.

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# LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES.

BEING

“CHAPTERS ON LANGUAGE”

AND

“FAMILIES OF SPEECH.”

BY THE

REV. FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D. F.R.S.

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CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS book is a reprint of my *Chapters on Language* and *Families of Speech*,—of which the former was written in defence of the theory of Onomatopœia as the only discovered or discoverable basis of language, and the latter was composed of Lectures delivered before the Royal Institution. Both works have passed through several editions, and the continued demand for them shows that they have been found useful by students of the young and intensely-interesting Science of Language. Subsequent study during the eleven years which have elapsed since their first publication would have enabled me to add largely to what I have here written on the subject, but it has not rendered necessary the alteration of a single material fact; and as both parts of the book in their original form were fortunate enough to receive the approval of very high authorities, I have felt justified in accepting the suggestion of the Publishers that they should now be republished in a single volume.

F. W. FARRAR.

WESTMINSTER, *November* 15, 1877.

Non excogitandum neque fingendum, sed inveniendum quid Natura  
faciat aut ferat.

BACON.

Εγὼ μὲν οὖν περὶ τούτων ὡς εὖρον καὶ ἀνέγων οὕτως ἔγραψα· εἰ  
δὲ τις ἄλλως βουλήσεται δοξάζειν περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀνεγκλητὸν ἔχέτω τὴν  
ἑτερογνωμοσίαν.

IOSEPHUS, *Anti.* x. II, 7.

## CHAPTERS ON LANGUAGE.

TO  
R. B. LITCHFIELD, ESQ.

IN MEMORY OF  
MANY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP,  
THESE PAGES  
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.



WHEN, in the year 1860, I published my book on the "Origin of Language," it was, I believe, the only book distinctly devoted to that subject which had appeared in England since the end of the last century. Since that time Philology has been daily gaining ground as a study of infinite importance, and I believe that the stimulus it has received has been mainly due to the eloquence and genius of Professor Max Müller, whose first series of Lectures was published in 1861. The views however which it was the object of my Essay to explain and illustrate, although they were propounded by philologists of the most unquestioned eminence, have found in Professor Müller a strong opponent, and therefore have met in England with but few converts and fewer supporters.

Nevertheless after constant study, and the most candid consideration of the objections urged against them, I believe that those views, in spite of the vehement assaults directed against them, remain absolutely unshaken. Now, if they are true, they furnish to Etymologists so simple and luminous a

principle whereby to guide their researches, and they throw so strong a light on one of the most interesting problems that can be presented for our solution, that it is most desirable that they should not be dismissed unexamined and with a sneer. I have therefore devoted some portion of this book to a careful, detailed, and respectful review of all that has been urged against them, and I have thought it due to the high authority deservedly attributed to Professor Müller's opinion, to state those objections in his own language. The answer may not be convincing to every one, but at least it will be admitted that the objections have been fairly met. I hope that I have never used a single expression inconsistent with the high respect which is due to the courtesy, learning, and ability of so eminent an opponent.

The controversial part of the book however only occupies a few chapters, and even in these I have steadily kept in view the object of bringing the theory into clearer and fuller relief—of placing it as far as possible on a scientific basis—of removing the misrepresentations which have clustered round it—and of supplying linguistic facts and illustrations which might be valuable to the student without any reference to his particular views. And, besides this, there are whole chapters of the book which have no controversial aspect whatever, and which may, I hope, contain suggestions not wholly unworthy of consideration by scholars of every shade of opinion.

I should not for a moment venture to speak of my

work in these terms if it contained nothing beyond the results of my own thought. But besides my own reasonings and speculations it sets forth the views of those who are incomparably more entitled to a hearing. A glance at almost any page will show that the authorities quoted are neither few nor unimportant; and, as I have carefully avoided an idle parade of learned names, I can assure the reader that there are very few references in the book—certainly none of any importance—which have not been derived immediately from my own reading. And, more than this, I have often fortified my position by the authority of others in cases where the thought was my own, and was expressed in my own language. In one or two places, which are always carefully pointed out, I closely follow the reasonings of the late Professor Heyse, whose book (*System der Sprachwissenschaft*) is one of the wisest and most beautiful treatises on this subject which have ever fallen into my hands. The reader too will find constant allusions to other profound philological writings, which I have always studied with great profit. I have placed at the end of the book a list of the works from which I have derived most advantage, and which have been most constantly in my hands.

In conclusion I have only to thank those critics who bestowed such indulgent consideration on my previous labours. Their approval, and the still more valuable notice of my work by some very eminent scholars, both English and Continental, have encouraged me to proceed.

I cannot hope to have escaped errors, and for these I venture to ask an indulgent consideration. These pages have been written, and the proof-sheets corrected, under a pressure of other avocations which has often made me hesitate whether I ought not wholly to abandon this subject to those who can study it under greater advantages. Any mistakes into which I have fallen are due to this cause, and not either to wilfulness or carelessness. Whether they are pointed out by friendly or by unfriendly critics, I shall always be ready to acknowledge and to correct them with cheerfulness and candour.

HARROW, *August 1865.*

# SYNOPSIS.



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# ON LANGUAGE.



## CHAPTER I.

### LANGUAGE, A HUMAN DISCOVERY.

Πάντα θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων πάντα.—Hippokrates.

GOD, who, in the words of Lactantius,<sup>1</sup> was ‘the artificer alike of the intelligence, of the voice, and of the tongue,’ gave to man, with those three gifts, the power of constructing a language for himself. Now we are entitled to conclude from the widest possible observation of God’s dealings with the human race, that He never bestows *directly* what man can obtain for himself by the patient and faithful use of intrusted powers. Science, for instance, by which we mean the sum total of all that has been discovered respecting the laws of nature, has furnished the human race with blessings of inestimable value ; and yet the secrets of science were never<sup>2</sup> revealed by a voice from heaven, and, although within the reach of human industry, were absolutely unknown to the ancient Hebrews. The living oracles intrusted to *their* charge spoke much of the nature of God, and revealed to the world that which, of himself, man could but dimly and most partially discover or understand—his relation to his

<sup>1</sup> ‘Deus et mentis, et vocis, et linguæ artifex.’—Lactant. *Instt.* vi. 21.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The Scriptures have *never yet revealed a single scientific truth.*’—Hugh Miller, *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 265.

Creator, the scheme of the divine government, and the means appointed for the purification and deliverance of the soul. The high majesty and grandeur of this revelation, its sacred origin and unspeakable importance, must not blind us to the fact that there are *other*<sup>1</sup> revelations also, which unveil to us in all their marvellous magnificence the works of God, and which yet were never accorded to Psalmist, or Priest, or Prophet, but to those great benefactors of their race who from time to time have been inspired to devote lives of ardent and devout study to the observation of the laws which God has imposed on His created Universe. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the advantages which Science, by thus deciphering the divine records of Creation, has conferred upon mankind; yet her lessons have never been whispered by angel or lawgiver, but, if we may borrow a poet's simile, they have been unclenched by sheer labour from the granite hand of nature. They have always been not immediate but mediate; not revealed to the idle, but discovered by the patient; not direct from God, but granted indirectly through the use of appointed means. Men have attained to them, not by gliding down the lazy stream of dogmatic inference, but by

Springing from crystal step to crystal step

of that bright ascent which leads to the serene heights of knowledge. 'And because all those scattered rays of beauty and loveliness which we behold spread up and down all the world over, are only the emanations of that inexhaustible light which is above, they have climbed up always by those sunbeams to the Eternal Father of Light.' God *never* lavishes gratuitously that which man can earn by faithful industry: this is an axiom which may be confidently claimed, a truth which may be broadly asserted, of every discovery which was *possible* to the intelligence of man.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Deus naturâ cognoscendus, dein doctrinâ recognoscendus.'—Tertullian. '*Duo sunt quæ in cognitionem Dei ducunt, Creatio et Scriptura.*' Aug.

That language *is* such a discovery—that it *is* possible for man to have arrived at speech from a condition originally mute, merely by using the faculties which God had implanted—has been proved repeatedly, and will, we hope, be further illustrated in the following pages. Even those who cling with tenacity to a belief in the revelation of language are compelled to admit the *possibility*<sup>1</sup> of its invention. How, indeed, can this be denied when it has been a matter of constant observation that deaf and dumb children, *before they have been taught*, can and do elaborate for themselves an intelligible language of natural and conventional signs? If, then, the invention of a *voiceless* language, addressed to the eye instead of the ear,—a language so much more cumbersome and difficult than articulate speech, and one in which the learner can receive little or no assistance from the multitudinous echoes of external nature,—be thus easily within the range of human capabilities so unusually limited, can we do otherwise than conclude that a *spoken* language—of which man must at once have perceived the analogon among the living creatures with which he was surrounded, and which required for its ample commencement *no achievement more difficult than the acceptance of sounds as the signs either of sounds or of the things which the sounds naturally recall*—was one which man, by the aid of the divine instincts within him, would spontaneously and easily invent, with nature as his beneficent instructress, and all the world before him as the school wherein to learn? We may therefore assert, as Dante<sup>2</sup> did five centuries ago,

That man speaks  
Is Nature's prompting; whether thus or thus  
She leaves to you as ye do most affect it.

'Entia non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem,' said William of Occam; 'frustra fit per plura quod fieri potest per pauciora.' It is astonishing how much spurious philosophy

<sup>1</sup> Chastel, *De la Raison*, pp. 283, 295. Dug. Stewart, *Phil. of the Mind*, iii. 1. Comp. Horne Tooke, *Divers. of Purley*, i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Carey's Dante, *Parad.* xxvi. 128.

and spurious theology is cut away by this 'razor of the Nominalists.' Those theologians who, by the liberal intrusion of unrecorded and purely imaginary miracles into every lacuna of their air-built theories, do their best to render science impossible, have earned thereby the merited suspicion of scientific men. Nevertheless, all *but* the most obstinate and the most prejudiced even of theologians ought to admit that if man *could* have invented language, we may safely conclude that he <sup>1</sup> *did*; for the wasteful prodigality of direct interposition and miraculous power which plays the chief part in the idle and anti-scriptural exegesis of many churchmen, finds no place in the divine economy of God's dealings displayed to us either in nature, in history, or in the inspired Word itself. This single consideration ought to be sufficient for any mind philosophically trained; but as too many engines cannot be employed against the invincible bastions of prejudice, let us proceed to additional and yet more conclusive arguments. I have stated elsewhere <sup>2</sup> the *positive* reasons which are adequate to disprove the revelation of language. The whole character of human speech, its indirect and imperfect methods, its distant metaphoric approximations, its traceable growth and decay, the recorded stages of historic development and decadence through which it passes, and the psychological and phonetic laws which rule these organic changes, furnish us at once with a decisive criterion of its human origin. An invention which, in spite of all its power and beauty, is essentially imperfect, could not have come direct from God. The single fact that the spiritual and abstract signification of roots is *never* the original one, but always arises from some incomplete and often wholly erroneous application or metaphor, is of itself adequate to confirm an *à priori* probability. The vast multitude <sup>3</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> Zobel, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, ad f.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Lang.* pp. 23-29.

<sup>3</sup> The number is very uncertain. Pott reckons about a thousand, *Die Ungleichheit d. Menschl. Racen*, 230-244. Adrian Balbi reckons 860, *Atlas Ethnogr. Dissert. Prélim.* lxxv. sqq. Crawford, *Ethnol. Trans.* i. 335, 1863.



human languages—certainly not fewer than 750 in number—differing from each other in words, in structure, and in sound, points inevitably, as we shall see hereafter, to the same conclusion.

Speech, moreover, is the correlative of the understanding.<sup>1</sup> It can express nothing which has not been developed by intelligence and thought. It can have no existence independent of, or separate from our conception of things. It may be *unable to keep pace with* the advancing power of abstraction, but it never can by any possibility anticipate or outstrip it. A language without corresponding conceptions would be a babble of unintelligible sounds; 'for words,' says<sup>2</sup> Bacon, 'are but the image of matter; and, except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture.' If then a language were dictated, or in any other manner directly revealed to the earliest men, the comprehension<sup>3</sup> of ideas must necessarily have been inspired with the signs which expressed them; in other words, the full-grown understanding must have been created together with the language, since the only difference between the imitative vocal faculty of children and some animals consists in the fact that with animals the sound in most instances remains a sound, while the understanding of man teaches him the conceptions *pari passu* with the sounds, so that *the sounds* become *signs*. But

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, *Syst. d. Sprachwissenschaft*, p. 51. We do not deny to language a certain *maieutic* power which enables us to bring our conceptions into clearer light, by reducing them into shape, and by enabling us to reason respecting them; but when Hamann calls speech the '*Dei para unserer Vernunft*,' it is easy to see that the expression can with at least equal truth be reversed.

<sup>2</sup> *Advancement of Learning*, p. 100; compare the dictum of the Buddhist philosopher: 'Le nom et la forme ont pour cause l'intelligence; et l'intelligence a pour cause le nom et la forme.'—Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la bonne Foi*, p. 550. 'Wie der Mensch eine Einheit von Geist und Leib, so ist das Wort die Einheit von Begriff und Laut.'—Becker, *Organism. d. Sprache*, § 1, 2, 4. Hermann, *Das Problem d. Sprache*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Maine de Biran, *Orig. de Lang.* Œuvres inéd. iii. 239.

to assert in this sense the *creation* of the human understanding, is, after the manner of certain ignorant divines, to force upon us as an article of faith, that which is nothing more than an arbitrary<sup>1</sup> and anti-philosophic hypothesis. For to suppose the creation of a full-grown understanding contradicts the very nature of the understanding as 'the<sup>2</sup> faculty of relations or comparisons.' An understanding can no more exist without having passed through the very processes which constitute its activity, than a tree can show its thousand layers of wood without having passed through as many seasons of growth and change. The impulse to self-development, and the capacity for it, are indeed innate in the higher races of man; but to assert that the *results*<sup>3</sup> of this impulse were revealed, is to contradict both History and the order of nature. For nothing is more certain, even as an historical fact, than that man did not come into the world with his abstract ideas ready made; nothing is more certain than that the *growth* of abstract ideas can be distinctly traced, and that, to be primitive, a word *must* express some material image.<sup>4</sup>

For all reasoners, except that portion of the clergy who in all ages have been found among the bitterest enemies of scientific discovery,<sup>5</sup> these considerations have been conclusive. But, strange to say, here, as in so many other instances, this self-styled orthodoxy, more orthodox than the Bible itself, *directly contradicts the very Scriptures which it professes to explain*, and, by sheer misinterpretation, succeeds in producing a needless and deplorable collision between the statements of Scripture and those other mighty and certain

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<sup>1</sup> Maine de Biran, *ubi sup.* p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Sir W. Hamilton, *Discussions*, p. 4, note.

<sup>3</sup> Heyse, *l. c.*

<sup>4</sup> Benloew, *Sur l'Origine des Noms de Nombre*, pp. ix, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Witness the lives of Vigilius, of Giordano Bruno, of Vanini, of Galileo, of Kepler, of Descartes, of La Peyrère, of Dr. Morton, of the early geologists, and of hundreds more. There is hardly a single nascent science against which theological dogmatism has not injuriously paraded its menacing array of misinterpreted or inapplicable texts.

truths which have been revealed to Science and to Humanity as their glory and reward. *On the human origin of language, the voice of the Bible coincides perfectly with the voice of reason and of science.* In the passage which deals directly with the origin of language, the Bible implies, as distinctly as it is possible to imply, that language resulted from the working of human faculties, and was *not* a direct gift from God to man.<sup>1</sup>

We shall consider the chief passage in Genesis immediately: but before doing so it is necessary to clear away a preliminary misconception. We find repeatedly, in the earlier chapters of the Bible, the expression '*God said*;' and as this is used before the mention of Adam's gift of speech, it is at once inferred that language was revealed. Surely such a method of interpretation, stupidly and slavishly literal, and wholly incapable of rising above the simplest anthropomorphism, shows that the vail which was upon the hearts of men when Moses was read in their synagogues some 1800 years ago, is by no means as yet removed! Luther, far more advanced, and far more liberal than many modern theologians, could enforce the explanation that '*God said*' had nothing to do with the voice or articulations of human language; Bishop Patrick could write 'wherever in the history of the creation these words are used, *God said*, it must be understood to mean '*He willed*;' "<sup>2</sup> nay, more, St. Gregory of Nyssa could vigorously and eloquently denounce the hypothesis of a revealed language as '*Jewish nonsense and folly*' (φλואρία καὶ ματαιότης 'Ιουδαϊκή),<sup>3</sup> and St. Augustine

<sup>1</sup> Any one who wishes to support by authorities the Revelation of language has on his side Mohammed and some of the Rabbis! See Kircher, *Tur. Bab.* iii. 4, p. 147. Michaeler, *De Orig. Ling.* Vien. 1738. Everything that *can* be said on the question is to be found in M. de Bonald, Ladevi-Roche, and Süßmilch, *Versuch eines Beweises dass die erste Sprache ihren Ursprung vom Schöpfer erhalten habe.*—Berl. 1766.

<sup>2</sup> As indeed it is rendered in the Arabic version.

<sup>3</sup> *Contra Eunomium* Or. xii., Aug. *de Ordine*, ii. 12. Cf. St. Basil, *Orat.* ii., and Severianus, *De Mundi Creat.* (Bibl. Patr. xii. 119.)

could unhesitatingly write '*Vidit (ratio) imponenda esse rebus vocabula, id est significantes quosdam sonos:*' yet some modern writers, essentially aggressive and essentially retrogressive,—doctors of that school which learns nothing and forgets nothing, and whom eighteen centuries have only pushed back behind the earliest Fathers in tolerance and liberality,—can only see in the certainty of a language discovered by mankind 'a materialist and deistic hypothesis !'<sup>1</sup> Before being guilty of an inference so groundless as the supposed revelation of language from the obiter dictum of an 'auctoris aliud agentis'—an inference which contradicts the express assertion of the Jehovist when he is treating *directly* of the subject—might they not have observed that the same expression is used by the Elohist of God's laws *respecting animals*? 'And God blessed them (*i.e.*, great whales; and every winged fowl, &c.), *saying*, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth' (Gen. i. 22). Are we then to infer from this that God also revealed a language to animals,<sup>2</sup> and invented a dialect for birds and whales; or rather are we to open our purblind eyes to the fact that *the letter killeth*, and the spirit giveth life?

But, as I have said already, the assertors of revealed language distinctly contradict the very book to which, in their desire to usurp the keys of all knowledge, they groundlessly

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<sup>1</sup> M. Ladevi-Roche—who in his treatise, *De l'Origine du Langage* (p. 7, 1860, Bordeaux), undertakes to resuscitate the moribund reasonings of M. de Bonald. Such arguments in this day are an anachronism, and they are not worth the trouble of refuting. There is nothing of the slightest value in his little treatise, and Science can afford to despise the declamatory anathemas hurled by the most ignorant of men at all her votaries, from Thales and Anaxagoras down to Darwin and Lyell. 'Cette opinion semblait abandonnée, quand elle a été relevée de nos jours par une école d'un zèle fougueux et plus orthodoxe que la Bible, et qui semble avoir pris à tâche de réaliser le fameux *Credo quia absurdum*.'—Baudry, *De la Science du Langage*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Steinthal, *Gesch. der Sprachwissenschaft*, § 15. Charma, *Ess. sur le Langage*, p. 247.

appeal as a scientific authority. For what does the Jehovist say? 'And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam *to see*<sup>1</sup> *what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.* And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field' (Gen. ii. 19, 20). When we remember the invariable tendency of the Semitic intellect to overlook in every instance all secondary causes, and to attribute every result *directly* to the agency of superior beings, it is clear that by no possibility could the writer have given more unmistakeable expression to his view that language was the product of the human intelligence, and had no origin more divine than that which is divine in man.

Nature with its infinity of sweet and varied sounds was ringing in the ears of primal man. 'Heavens!' exclaims Herder, 'what a schoolroom of ideas and of speech! Bring no Mercury or Apollo as a *Deus ex machina* from the clouds to earth. The whole many-sounding godlike nature is man's

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<sup>1</sup> לִרְאוֹת = to try. In the Arabic version it is wrongly rendered '*to teach*,' 'ut ostenderet ei quod vocaret.'—Walton's *Polyglot*. On the other hand the Chaldee version renders 'man became a living animal,' (לִכְפֹּשׁ הָיָא) by a 'speaking spirit' (לְרוּחַ מְלָלָא). If these versions were correct, it is obvious that the texts would contradict each other as much as they do in M. Ladevi-Roche's inference from Gen. ii. 19. 'Ce que signifie que l'homme avait été créé pensant et parlant' (p. 9). One of the rabbis explains 'that was the name thereof,' to mean its name in the thought of God before Adam uttered it. Hamann, Herder's friend, approves this explanation, and illustrates it by 'the Word was God.'—John i. 1. For a mass of idle learning (?) on the subject of Adam's *ὀνομαθεῖα*, see Clem. Alex. *Strom.* i. 335; Jos. *Antt.* i. 2; Fabricius, *Cod. Pseudep.* v. 6; Buddæus, *Hist. V. T.* i. 93; Heidegger, *Hist. Patr.* i. 148; Witsius, § 3, 162; Carpzov. *Apparat. Crit.* p. 113; Otho, *Lex. Rab.* s. v. Adam; Hottinger, *Hist. Or.* 22, &c. After diligent examination of these passages, and many more on the same topic, I may safely say that more really valuable exegesis may be found in a sentence or two of Steinthal, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 23; *Gesch. d. Sprachwissensch.* p. 12, 15.

language-teacher and Muse. She leads all her creatures before him; each carries its name upon its tongue, and declares itself vassal and servant to this veiled yet visible god! It delivers to him its markword into the book of his sovereignty, like a tribute, in order that he may by this name remember it, and in the future use and call it. I ask whether this truth, viz., that the understanding, whereby man is lord of nature, was the source of a living speech which he drew for himself from the sounds of creatures, as tokens whereby to distinguish them—I ask whether this dry truth could in Oriental fashion be more nobly or beautifully expressed than by saying that God led the animals to him to see what he would name them, and the name that he would give them, that should be the name thereof? How, in Oriental poetic fashion, can it be more distinctly stated that man discovered speech for himself out of the tones of living Nature, as a sign of his ruling intelligence? and that is the point which I am proving.<sup>1</sup>

There are other meanings of the passage in Genesis, full of profundity and moral value. This is not the place to dwell upon them, although they have almost universally been overlooked; but what we *may* at once conclude from the passage is this—that in this case, as in so many others, those who oppose science and try to sweep back with their petty human schemes of interpretation its mighty advancing tide, are usually as much at variance with the true meaning of Scripture, as they are in direct antagonism to reason and truth. ‘The expressions of Moses,’ says one<sup>2</sup> whose orthodoxy none will call in question—the late Archbishop

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<sup>1</sup> *Abhandlung über den Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 77. This is one of the most eloquent and delightful essays ever written. That Herder should have lived to retract it, and retrograde into the orthodox mysticism of Hamann is truly astonishing. He gave up his own invincible arguments to acquiesce in an opinion which had been contemptuously rejected by Plato two thousand years before him, and which had even been refuted by a Father of the Church—Gregory of Nyssa—when it had been supported by Eunomius, the Arian Bishop of Cyzicus.

<sup>2</sup> Abp. Sumner, *Records of Creation*, i. 270.

Sumner in his 'Records of Creation'—'are evidently adapted to the first and familiar notions derived from the sensible appearances of the earth and heavens; and *the absurdity of supposing that the literal interpretation of terms in Scripture ought to interfere with the advancement of philosophical inquiry* would have been as generally forgotten as renounced, if the oppressors of Galileo had not found a place in history.'

## CHAPTER II.

## THE EXPERIMENT OF PSAMMETICHUS.

Καὶ ἐσίουσι τὰ παῖδια ἀμφοτέρω προσπίπτοντα ΒΕΚΟΣ ἐφώνεον.

Herod. ii. 2.

LET us try for a moment to pass back in imagination to the dawn of humanity. Let us try to conceive—not as an idle exercise of the fancy, but in accordance with inductive observations and psychological facts—the processes by which the earliest human beings were led to invent designations for the immense and varied *non-ego* of the universe around them.

The analogy between the childhood of our race and the childhood of every human being has been instinctively observed, and has been used for the purpose of linguistic experiments. Whether Frederick II. (of Germany) or James IV. (of Scotland)<sup>1</sup> ever shut up children in an island or elsewhere, with no attendants, or only such as were dumb, may not be certain; but after due deliberation, I strongly incline to accept as a fact the famous story which Herodotus received from the Egyptian priests, that a similar attempt to discover the original language was made by Psammetichus, king of Egypt. I am not aware that a single valid argument has been adduced against its authenticity. Not only does the story carry with it, in its delicious *naïveté*, the air of truth, but also it is quite certain that a nation, so intoxicated

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<sup>1</sup> See *Origin of Lang.* p. 9 and p. 14, where I have given some reasons for not rejecting the story about Psammetichus, as is done by Sir G. Wilkinson (Rawlinson's *Herod.* i. 251) on very insufficient grounds.



with vanity on the subject of their transcendent age as the Egyptians were, would never have *invented* a story which unjustly conceded to the Phrygians a precedence in antiquity. Accepting the story, therefore, we do not agree with Professor Max Müller<sup>1</sup> in despising all such experiments, but, on the contrary, regard this fragment of practical philology as one of extreme value, and all the more valuable because, as he justly observes, all such experiments would now be 'impossible, illegal, and unnatural.' For the story, if it be true, establishes three most important conclusions, which are in themselves highly probable—viz., 1. That children *would* learn for themselves to exercise the faculty of speech; 2. That the first things which the young Egyptian children named were animals; and 3. That they named the goats, the only animals with which they were familiar, *by an onomatopœia*; for that Bekos, the word uttered by the children, is simply an imitation of the bleating of goats is evident.<sup>2</sup> It is to us a strong internal evidence of the truthfulness of the story that it furnishes us with conclusions so exactly in accordance with those at which we arrive from a number of quite different data. The radii of inference from many other sources all converge to the common centre of a similar hypothesis. And be it observed that the facts, so far from being

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<sup>1</sup> *Lectures, First Series*, p. 333. He is so far right that the experiment would be inconclusive; but why? because to make it valuable we should require *an indefinite number of children and an indefinite length of time*. But our assertion of the human origin and gradual discovery of language rests on quite other grounds.

<sup>2</sup> 'Bekos' is (if we regard *os* as a mere Greek termination added by Herodotus) the exact and natural onomatopœia for the bleat of a goat, as has been noticed by English children; and it is in fact so used in the chorus of more than one popular song, and in the French *becqueter*. The fact that *no suspicion of such an explanation of the sound* occurred to Psammetichus, or any of those who heard the story, is an additional confirmation of its truth. It is strange that no Greek was ingenious enough to hit on this explanation, although they had the onomatopœias βῆξ, βήσσω, βηχία, &c. Compare the French name for a goat *bouc*, Germ. *boc*, Ital. *becco*, &c.

invented in confirmation of any such hypothesis, were interpreted by the Egyptian philosophers in a totally different, and indeed in a most ludicrous manner. The confirmation ought to remain unsuspected, because it is wholly unintentional.

(i.) As regards the first of these conclusions—that children left to themselves would evolve the rudiments of a language—Max Müller says that it ‘shows a want of appreciation of the bearings of the problem, if philosophers appeal to the fact that children are born without language, and gradually emerge from mutism to a full command of articulate speech. We want no explanation how birds learn to fly, created as they are with organs adapted to that purpose.’ The illustration appears to be unfortunate in many respects, and wholly beside the mark. Every bird flies at once and instinctively when its organs are full-grown—the action is as instinctive to them as sucking is to every infant mammalian; but the exercise of speech is an action infinitely complex, and innumerable accidents have proved that a *single* child growing up in savage loneliness would have *no* articulate language. But is it by any means certain that this would be the case with a *colony* of infants, isolated and kept alive by some casualty which prevented them from learning any existing dialect? The question cannot be answered with *certainty*, though it seems probable that as our knowledge advances we may be able to affirm that such must and would be the case. It is a well-known fact that the neglected children in some of the Canadian and Indian villages,<sup>1</sup> who are often left alone for days, can and do invent for themselves a sort of *lingua franca*, partially or wholly unintelligible to all except themselves. And if it be objected to this illustration that these children have already heard articulate speech, which, on the theory of a human invention of language, would not have been the case with the earliest men, we again appeal to the

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. Moffat testifies to a similar phenomenon in the villages of S. Africa, *Mission Travels*.

acknowledged fact that deaf-mutes have an instinctive power to develop for themselves a language of signs—a power which continues in them *until* they have been taught some artificial system, and which then only ceases because it is useful no longer; just as in the animal kingdom an organ decays, and becomes rudimentary when its exercise ceases to be of any importance to the possessor.

(ii.) Our second observation from the story of Herodotus was that the first things which the children named were animals; and this too is precisely in accordance with everyday facts. Even a young infant learns very soon to distinguish practically between the animate and the inanimate creation; and few things excite its astonishment and pleasure more than the various animals around it. Careful observation of the progress of children in the power of using speech will soon convince any one that they learn to name the dog, the cow, the sheep, and the horse among their earliest words, and indeed soon after they have learnt to attach significance to those natural sounds by which all nations express the relationships of father and mother.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in representing the *animals* as the first existing things which received their names from the earliest man, the Jehovist of the Book of Genesis wrote with a profound insight into the nature of language and the germs out of which it is instinctively developed.

(iii.) But, thirdly, from the fact that the only sound used by the Egyptian children was an imitation of the sounds made by the only living things with which they were familiar, we saw another indication of the fact that onomatopœia (which is only a form of the many imitative<sup>2</sup> tendencies which characterize the highest animals) is the most natural and fruitful source out of which the faculty of speech was instinctively evolved;—the first stepping-stone in the stream which separates sound from sense, matter

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<sup>1</sup> See Buschman, *Ueber d. Naturlaut*.

<sup>2</sup> The cause of this particular development of the imitative instinct will be explained hereafter.

from intelligence, thought from speech;—the keystone of that mighty bridge which divides the *δύναμις* from the *ἔργον*, the faculty from the fact. In this point also our inference is curiously confirmed by a variety of observed phenomena.

What, for instance, *are* the names by which, in the present day, children first learn to distinguish animals? *Are they not invariably onomatopœtic?*<sup>1</sup> Is any one acquainted with any child, ordinarily trained, which first learnt to call a dog, a cow, or a sheep by their names, without having learnt, by means of the nursery onomatopœias, that a sound may stand for a thing? *This* is the most difficult lesson of all language; and when, by the use of a few words, the child has once learnt it,—when it has once succeeded in catching this elementary conception,—the rest follows with astonishing rapidity. Hence, *very few* onomatopœias, and these borrowed from the commonest and simplest objects, are sufficient for the purpose. What the child has to learn is, that a modification of the ambient medium by a motion of the tongue can be accepted as a representation of the objects which are mirrored upon his retina—in other words, that the objects of sight may be recalled and identified by articulated sounds. But how is he to learn this

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<sup>1</sup> A horse does not *frequently* neigh; and this is probably the reason that in so many dialects the childish onomatopœia for it is derived, not from the sound it makes, but from the sounds (Lautgeberden) addressed to it, *e.g.*, in English *gee-gee*; in parts of Germany, on the other hand, *hotte-pârd*; in Finland, *humma*, &c. See Wedgwood, *Etym. Dict.* s. v. Hobby, ii. 246. (That *horse* is itself an onomatopœia seems possible from the cognate form *hross*, Germ. *Ross*.) The fact, then, that a young child names a horse from the sounds used in urging horses on, only shows how *widely various are the points which may suggest the onomatopœtic designation*. Similarly in Spain a mule-driver is called *arriero* from his cry *arri*, and in the French argot an omnibus is *aie aie*. The whole observation illustrates the active, living power of speech, which is no mere dead matter that can be handed over from father to son. See Heyse, *Syst. d. Sprachwissenschaft*, § 47. Even a watch is to a child invariably a *tick-tick*, and the very same onomatopœia is used in the *lingua franca* of Vancouver's Island, and in which we also find 'hehe,' 'liplip,' 'tam-water,' &c. for 'laugh,' 'boil,' 'cataract,' &c.

marvellous lesson? Only by observing instinctively that since certain things give forth certain sounds, the repetition of the sound, by an inevitable working of the law of association, recalls the object which emits it. Nor is it the slightest objection to this to say that the child does not learn the onomatopœia for itself, but learns it from its nurse. Supposing that we grant this, what does it prove? Simply the fact that every nurse and every mother is guided by the swift, beautiful, and unerring beneficence of instinct to follow the very same process which the great mother, Nature, adopted when man was her infant child ;—or let us say, in language more reverent, and not less true, that such a process is in instinctive unconscious accordance with the great method of the Creator. For the whole *idea of language*,—the conception that those impressions which the brain mainly receives through the sense of sight may be combined and expressed by means of the sense of hearing, influenced through the organs of sound,—the discovery, in fact, of a common principle, by virtue of which unity and coherence may be given to every external impression,—all lies in the discovery, by a child, that a rude ideal imitation of the bark of a dog may serve as a sign or mark for the dog itself. Hence, although Professor Max Müller's designation of the onomatopoetic theory of language as the 'bow-wow theory,'<sup>1</sup> was accepted by all flippant minds as a piece of crushing and convincing wit, it is really nothing but an undignified way of expressing that which is, as we shall see *by his own admission*, a great linguistic probability, and which at any rate deserves respectful consideration, because it has been deliberately accepted by some of the greatest thinkers and the greatest philologists of the century.

Plutarch tells us the commonly accepted Egyptian legend that Thoth was the first inventor of language ; and he adds

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<sup>1</sup> We are glad to find an expression of half-regret for this unfortunate term in later editions of Prof. Müller's lectures ; to abandon it finally would be but a graceful concession to the many eminent men who have held the view.

the curious tradition that, previous to his time, men *had no other mode of expression than the cries of animals*. That such may well have been the case is illustrated by the fact that it has been found to be so among wild children lost in the woods and there caught long afterwards. Thus we are told of Clemens, one of the wild boys received in the asylum at Overdyke (an asylum rendered necessary by the number of children left destitute and uncared for in Germany after Napoleon's desolating wars), that 'his knowledge of birds and their habits was extraordinary,' and that 'to every bird he had given a distinctive and often very appropriate name of his own, which they appeared to recognise as he whistled after them;' <sup>1</sup> a sentence which can only mean that his onomatopœias were of the most objective or simply-imitative kind. Here, then, in historical times, is a surprising, unquestionable, and most unexpected confirmation of the inferences which we felt ourselves entitled to draw from the story of Psammetichus. Without dwelling on the arguments adduced in a previous <sup>2</sup> work, or attaching too much importance to the fact that the aborigines of Malacca 'lisp their words, the sound of which is like the noise of birds,' or that the vocabulary of the Yamparicos is 'like the growling of a dog, eked out by a copious vocabulary of signs,' we may find a very strong indication of the reasonableness of our belief in the certainty that the more savage (*i.e.*, the more natural and primitive) any language is, the more invariably does it abound in onomatopœias, and the more certain we are to find that the large majority of animals has an onomatopoetic designation.

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<sup>1</sup> See an interesting paper on *Wild Men and Beast Children*, by Mr. E. Burnet Tylor, *Anthropol. Rev.* i. p. 22; and Ladevi-Roche, *De l'Orig. du Lang.* p. 55. H—t. *Hist. d'une jeune Fille Sauvage*, Paris, 1775. Tulpius, *Obs. Med.* p. 298. Camerarius, *Hor. Subsec. Cent.* i. Francf. 1602. *Dict. des Merveilles de la Nature*, § v. *Sauvage*. Virey, *Hist. du Genre Hum.* i. 88 and ad f. &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 75 sqq.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE NAMING OF ANIMALS.

‘Fingere . . . Græcis magis concessum est, qui sonis etiam quibusdam et affectibus non dubitaverunt nomina aptare; *non aliâ libertate, quam quâ illi primi homines rebus appellationes dederunt.*’

QUINCTILIAN, *Instt. Or.* viii. 3.

EVERY fact which as yet we have passed in review would lead us to the conclusion that the first men, in *first* exercising the faculty of speech, gave names to the animals around them, and that those names were onomatopoeic.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly too much to say that *they could not have been otherwise.* For unless we agree with the ancient Analogists, and see a divine and mysterious connection, a natural and inexplicable harmony between words and things, by virtue of which each word necessarily expresses the inmost nature of the thing which it designates; or unless we are Anomalists, and attribute the connection of words with things to the purest accident, and the most haphazard and arbitrary conventions; —unless we declare ourselves unreservedly the champions of one or other of these equally exploded views, or accept in their place some mystical or inexplicable theory of ‘roots,’ we must be prepared with some other explanation which shall exclude from language alike the miraculous and the

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<sup>1</sup> The word ‘onomatopœia’ is now universally understood to mean a word invented on the basis of a sound-imitation. It may be worth a passing notice that Campbell’s use of it in his *Rhetoric* (ii. 194), to signify the transformation of a *name* into a word, as when we call a rich man a Croesus, or as in the line ‘Sternhold himself shall be *out-Sternholded*’—is, so far as we are aware, wholly unauthorised.

accidental. What this explanation is will appear hereafter ; but at present we may say that, having disproved the *revelation* of language, we cannot suppose its development possible without *some* connection between sounds and objects. Now, as we have seen already, no connection is so easy and obvious, so self-suggesting and so absolutely satisfactory, as the acceptation of a sound to represent a sound, which in its turn at once recalls the creature by which the sound is uttered. If we consider the natural instinct<sup>1</sup> which leads to the reproduction of sounds, the brute imitations of wild men and savage children, the onomatopoeic stepping-stones to speech adopted by *all* children, and the *à priori* presumption just explained, little or no doubt upon this point can remain in any candid mind.

But we can go yet further by examining the *actual* nomenclature of animals in existing languages.

If we consider any number of names for animals in any modern language, we shall find that they fall into various classes, viz : 1. Those for which no certain derivation can be suggested ; 2. Those derived from some analogy, or characteristic, or combination of characteristics which the animal presents ; 3. Those which are distinctly onomatopoeic in origin or in form.

The first class of words cannot of course furnish us with any linguistic inferences, and may here be left out of the question ;<sup>2</sup> under the second and third classes fall *all names*

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<sup>1</sup> This *imitativeness* (in which lies the tendency to onomatopœia) is found even in animals. I once possessed a young canary which never sang until it heard a child's squeaking doll. It immediately caught up and imitated this sound, *which it never afterwards lost*. It is well known that nest-birds, if hatched by a bird of another species, will reproduce, or attempt to reproduce, its notes. There are good reasons for believing (since wild dogs do not bark) that the bark of the domestic dog is the result of hearing the human voice. See *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, Feb. 1861.

<sup>2</sup> We assume, however, that every word *has* a reasonable derivation if we only knew what it was ; just as we know that no *place* in the world ever received a name which could not be accounted for, though there are hundreds of such names of which we can *now* give no explanation.



of recent origin ; and if, as the Bible asserts, and as has been shown to be independently probable, animals were the first objects to receive names, they MUST have received names belonging to the third class (*viz.* : *onomatopæias*), because no previous words would have existed wherewith to designate or combine their observed qualities.

But the imitative origin of animal names is not only *à priori* most probable, but reasoning *à posteriori* we see it to be generally the fact. If we would discover any analogies for the speech of primitive man, we must look for them in the languages of those savage nations who approach most nearly to the condition in which man must have appeared upon the earth. Yet if we examine the vocabulary of almost any savage nation for this purpose, what are we certain to discover? *That almost every name for an animal is a striking and obvious onomatopæia.*

Take, for instance, the following names of some of the few birds and animals found in Australia :—

- Ke-a-ra-pai.* The white cockatoo.  
*Wai-la.* The black cockatoo.  
*Ka-rong-ka-rong.* A pelican.  
*Ki-ra-ki-ra.* The cock king-parrot.  
*Kun-ne-ta.* The hen king-parrot.  
*Mo-a-ne.* The kangaroo.  
*Nga-ü-wo.* The seagull.

These are chosen almost at random from ‘Threlkeld’s Australian Grammar,’ and in other cases the author himself calls marked attention to the similar origin of others, as follows :—

- ‘*Kong-ko-rong.* The emu, *from the noise it makes.*’ p. 87.  
 ‘*Pip-pi-ta.*<sup>1</sup> A small hawk, *so called from its cry.*’ p. 91.  
 ‘*Kong-kung.* Frogs, *so called from the noise they make.*’  
 p. 87.  
 ‘*Kun-bul.* The black swan, *from its note.*’ p. 87.

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<sup>1</sup> Compare the English name *Pippit*; the Latin *Pipilare*, &c.

Or again, let us take some specimens from a North American<sup>1</sup> dialect—the Algonquin. *Shi-sheeb*, duck; *chee-chish-koo-wan*, *kos-kos-koo-oo*, owl; *oo-oo-me-see*, screech-owl; *mai-mai*, redcrested woodpecker; *pau-pau-say*, common woodpecker; *shi-shi-gwa*, rattlesnake; *pah-pah-ah-qwau*, cock.<sup>2</sup>

In Chinese, too, a language which is generally believed to retain more of the characteristics of primitive speech than any other, 'the number of imitative sounds is very considerable.' A few may be seen quoted by Professor Müller in the first series of his Lectures (p. 252); but in point of fact they constitute a whole class. The sixth class of Chinese characters is called Hyai-Shing, 'meaning and sound.' 'These,' says Marshman,<sup>3</sup> in his Chinese Grammar, 'are formed by adding to a character which denotes the genus, *another which denotes the imagined sound of the species*, or the individual signified. They adduce by way of example *kyang*, which, by adding to *shooi*, water, the character *kong*, forms a character which denotes a rapid stream, from an allusion to the sound of its water when rushing down with violence. And also *ho*, the generic name of rivers, which is formed by adding to *shooi*, water, *ho* the supposed sound of a river in its course.' These, with the signs Chwán-chyn, are about 3000 in number.

Savage languages are, as we have already observed, the best to show us what *must* have been the primitive procedure; but we can trace the same necessary elements of words in languages far more advanced. In Sanskrit, for instance, is not *gô*, the original of our cow<sup>4</sup> (Germ. *kuh*;

<sup>1</sup> The highly euphonic character of the *New Zealand* language renders it unsuitable for illustrating the point before us; otherwise one can hardly avoid seeing onomatopœias in *Ti-oi-oi*, *Aki-aki*, *Akoa-akoa*, the names of different birds, *Pipipi*, the turkey, &c. See the *Ch. Miss. Soc.'s New Zealand Gram.* Lond. 1820.

<sup>2</sup> I have borrowed these Algonquin words from a suggestive chapter in Dr. Daniel Wilson's *Prehistoric Man*, i. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Marshman, *Chinese Gram.* p. 24. It must be admitted that his explanation is not particularly lucid.

<sup>4</sup> *Gô*, in Sanskrit, also means a *voice*; almost all the derivatives from

comp. the words *bos*, βοῦς, βοῶν, γοῶν), a direct imitation of the sound which the English child imitates by *moo* (comp. *mugire*)? Is not *bukka* a goat (comp. *bukkana* barking, *bukhâra* the lion's roar, βύσσω, βύκρης, *bucca*, *buccina*, *buck*, *butt*) a very obvious onomatopœia? Is not *çukara*<sup>1</sup> a pig (cf. *sūs*, *sus*, Irish *suig*, Welsh *hwch*, Russian *cushka*) as transparently onomatopoetic as *krakara* a partridge, *hiñkâra* a tiger? Can we see any other origin for *çvâna*, *bhashaka*, and *rudatha*, names for the dog, from *kvan* to sound, *bhash* to bark, and *rud* to cry? In *hañsa* a goose (Lithuan. *Zâsis*, Thibet. *ngangba*), and in the Persian *gîgranah*, a crane, the same principle is indubitably at work, and in all these instances the onomatopœia, as it is indeed *incontestable*, is frankly admitted by M. Pictet,<sup>2</sup> the highest of authorities in everything which concerns the primitive Aryans, although he never admits such an explanation unless it is absolutely necessitated by the facts. Yet in the following cases also, where the Sanskrit root runs through the whole Aryan family of languages, he cannot avoid referring the names to simple imitation; nor can any candid reader avoid agreeing with him, as a glance will show.

*Bhêda*. Ram; compare the Danish *beede*, &c.

*Vatsa*. Calf; from *vad* and *sar*, giving a voice, *i.e.*, lowing.

*Mênâda*. He-goat, 'dont le cri est mê' (cf. *μηνάς* and the Phrygian *μᾶ* a sheep).

*Makshika*. Fly; from *maç*, to sound (musso).

*Bha*, *Bhramara* (cf. *βρῆμα*, fremo, &c.). The bee.

it adduced by Pictet are evident onomatopœias. Even in Chinese the animal is called *ngow*, *gü*, &c.

<sup>1</sup> These words mean the animal which makes the sound *çû*, *kra*, *hin*.

<sup>2</sup> See Pictet, *Les Origines Indo-Européennes, ou les Aryas Primitifs*, i. pp. 330-535. We should certainly feel inclined to add many other words (e.g. *sârispra*, serpent, &c.), in spite of the often-strained and unlikely derivations suggested for them. If they were not originally onomatopœias, they have at least *become* so; and instances of this reflex tendency are hardly less important, as throwing light upon our inquiries, than names indubitably imitative in their *origin*.

*Bambhara* (cf. βίμβρος, &c.). The bee: like our childish word bumble-bee.

*Indindira*. Great bee (cf. τινδίζων).

*Druna* (probablement aussi une onomatopée). A drone.

*Katurava*. Frog (cri rauque); and Bhêka, frog; 'sans doute une onomatopée.'

*Bhîruka* (root bhr, cf. Pers. *bîr*, thunder). A bear.

*Kurara* and *Kharaçabda*. Eagle.

*Kukkuta*. A cock.

*Grdhra*. Vulture.

*Krâgha* (Pers.). Hawk (cf. *karaghah*, crow).

*Krkavâku*. Fowl in general; from krka, and vaç, to sound.

*Uhîka*, *âlu*, *ghûka*, *gharghara*, &c. Owls of different kinds.

*Karaka*. Crow. Kâka (cf. chough, &c.), 'évidemment une pure onomatopée.'

*Kukûka*. Cuckoo.

*Koka*. Swan; 'imitatif du cri kouk ! kouk !'

*Karatu*. Crane.

*Tittiri*. Partridge.

*Varvaka*. Quail.

*Pika*. Woodpecker; 'cette racine n'est sans doute qu'une onomatopée.'

The list might be indefinitely multiplied; but let us now turn to the Hebrew, and see what analogous facts it offers. For the sake of English readers we will represent the Hebrew words in English characters also, that they may judge for themselves. Take, for instance, such distinctive imitative words as—

שְׂרַקְרָא *Scherakreka*. A pye; the Greek *καράναζα*.  
Bochart, *Hieroz.* ii. p. 298.

זָרְזִיר *Zarzîr*. A starling. *Id.* p. 353.

שִׁפְפֹן *Schephîphoun*. The horned snake. Gesen. *Thes.*  
iii. p. 146.

אַרְיֵה *Aryêh*. The lion. The supposed derivations are very doubtful.

אֵיִם *Iyim*. Lynxes. Nomen *ὀνομασποιοῦται*. Bochart, *Id.* i. 845.

גֹּר *Gûr*. A whelp.

שָׁחַל *Shâchal*. The roarer. From an Arabic root = *rugitus*.

דּוּכִיפַּת *Dûkîphath*. Lapwing (rather hoopoe, cf. Copt. *kukupha*); Lat. *Upupa*.<sup>1</sup> Bochart, *Hieroz.* ii. p. 347.

צִיִּים *Tzîim*. Wild cats, &c.

לָבִיָּא *Lâbhîa*. A lioness; 'rugiendi sonum imitans.' Gesen. *Thes.* s. v.

סִיס *Sîs*. A swallow; compare Ital. *zizilla*, Lat. *zinzulare*, &c. Bochart, *Hieroz.* vol. ii. p. 62.

תּוֹר *Tôr*. A turtle-dove (*turtur*, &c.).

צִלְצַל *Tsilâtzâl*. A locust, from its shrill noise.

Again, if we take the ancient Egyptian language<sup>2</sup> we find such words as *mouee*, a lion; *hippep*, an ibis; *ehe*, a cow; *hepepep*, hoopoe; *croor*, frog; *rurr*, pig; *chaoo*, cat; *phin*, mouse.

We see then that, alike in the Semitic and in the Aryan families, onomatopœia supplies a *certain* and satisfactory etymology for the names of many animals; and if we add doubtful cases, where the suggested derivations are awkward and farfetched, we might say, without exaggeration, of *most* animals. We have seen similar onomatopœias in the ancient Egyptian, which is supposed to have affinities with both; and we have found them immensely prevalent in various sporadic families, which some would call Turanian—a name which we may on some future occasion see very good reason to reject. In fact, in these Allophylian savage dialects, and

<sup>1</sup> Hence the Greek legend about its cry—that it was the transformed Tereus crying *Ποῦ, ποῦ*.

<sup>2</sup> *Prehistoric Man*, i. 71.

the more so in proportion to the primitive character of the people who speak them, onomatopœia appears to be the rule, and terms derived from other relations or properties the rare exception. Without going any further, is it possible to doubt what *must* have been the *tendency* of animal nomenclature among the earliest men ?

It has often happened in modern times that the extension of travel and commerce has thrown nations into connection with lands in which the flora and fauna are wholly different from their own. The instinctive procedure which they adopt to name these new objects will add new strength to our position. For here again one of these four processes takes place ; either 1. They adopt the existing or aboriginal term, which they find already in use ; or 2. They use a compound, expressive of some quality or resemblance, as in cat-bird, snow-bird, mocking-bird, blue-bird, &c. ; 3. They *misapply* some previous name of the animal most nearly resembling the one to be named ; or 4. If they invent a new and original (indecomposable) term, *it is invariably an onomatopœia*.

1. The first procedure requires no illustration, as it offers nothing curious or instructive beyond the fact that the shorter and easier a native name is, the more readily is it adopted. The only reason why this practice is not more common is the inordinate length of the delicate imitative appellations in primitive languages.

2. The second process is not so common, and is only interesting as illustrating the *variety* of observed characteristics by which a name may be suggested. For instance, the elephant has been called by names meaning 'the twice-drinking animal (*dvīpa*), or the two-tusked (*dvirada*), or the creature that uses its hand (*hastin*) ; yet these different conceptions all represent one and the same object. Similarly the serpent is called in Sanskrit by names meaning 'going on the breast,'<sup>1</sup> or 'wind-eating.' Pictet furnishes us with

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<sup>1</sup> *Les Orig. Indo-Eur.* 1. 383. It is perhaps more common in the Zincoli language than any other. Biondelli, *Studii Linguistici*, p. 114,

many similar instances of this method of nomenclature, which is illustrated by the name duck-billed platypus, or 'beast with a bill,' for the ornithorhynchus of New Zealand, and the Dutch aardvark, or 'earth-pig,' for the *Orycteropus capensis*. 'Of everything in nature,' says Bopp, 'of every animal, of every plant, speech can seize only one property to express the whole by it.'

3. The third process deserves passing notice, because we shall see hereafter its importance. 'In the slow migrations of the human family,' says Dr. Daniel Wilson, 'from its great central hives, language imperceptibly adapted itself to the novel requirements of man. But with the discovery of America a new era began in the history of migration. . . . In its novel scenes language was at fault. It seemed as if language had its work to do anew as when first framed amid the life of Eden. The same has been the experience of every new band of invading colonists, and it can scarce fail to strike the European naturalist, on his first arrival in the New World, that its English settlers, after occupying the continent for upwards of three centuries, instead of inventing root-words wherewith to designate plants and animals, as new to them as the nameless living creatures were to Adam in Paradise, apply in an irregular and unscientific manner the names of British and European flora and fauna. Thus the name of the English partridge is applied to one American tetranoid (*Tetrao umbellus*), the pheasant to another (*Tetrao cupido*); and that of our familiar British warbler, the robin, to the *Turdus migratorius*, or totally different American<sup>1</sup> thrush.'

Mr. E. J. Eyre remarks that when an Australian sees any object unknown to him, he does not *invent* a name for it, but immediately gives it a name drawn from its resemblance to some known object. This is very true, but it is strange

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and in many argots, e.g. in the German Rothwelsch, goose is Plattfusz, hare = Langfusz, ass = Langohr, &c.—*Id.* 113.

<sup>1</sup> *Prehistoric Man*, i. 62.

that he should have considered it as peculiar to Australians.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the fact has been observed from the earliest times, and is noticed by authors so ancient as Epicurus,<sup>2</sup> Aristotle,<sup>3</sup> and Varro. The latter<sup>4</sup> observes that in Latin the names of fish are usually borrowed from the land creatures which most resemble them, as *anguilla* (eel) from *anguis* (snake). Several similar instances occur among the Romans. The elephant, for instance, they called the Lucanian *ox*, not being at first familiar with its name, and knowing of no animal larger<sup>5</sup> than the ox; the giraffe they styled *camelopardus*, from its points of resemblance to the camel and the leopard, and *ovis fera*<sup>6</sup> (or foreign sheep), from the mildness of its disposition; and they knew the black lion by the synonym of 'Libyan bear.' The Dakotas, we are told, called the horse *sungka-wakang*,<sup>7</sup> or spirit-dog; and Mr. Darwin<sup>8</sup> tells us that in 1817, 'as soon as a horse reached the shore, the whole population took to flight, and tried to hide themselves from "*the man-carrying pig*" as they christened it.' Some American nations call the lion 'the great<sup>9</sup> and mischievous cat.' In the Fiji Islands man's flesh is known as 'long pig.' When first they saw a white paper kite<sup>10</sup> they

<sup>1</sup> 'Der Mensch stellt beständig Vergleichen an zwischen dem Neuen was ihm vorkommt, mit Alten was er schon kennt.'—Pott, *Etym. Forsch.* ii. 139.

<sup>2</sup> "Ὅθεν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀδελῶν ἀπὸ τῶν φαινόμενων χρὴ σημειοῦσθαι.—Epic. ap. Diog. Laert. x. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Φύσικα, i. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'Vocabula piscium pleraque translata a terrestribus ex aliquâ parte similibus rebus, ut anguilla.'—Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* v. 77. (Comp. ἔχis, ἔγχελος). Compare Amos ix. 3, where 'snake' is used for a sea-creature. By a very natural transference *anguilla* in later Latin means a thong for punishing boys—the Scotch 'tawse.'—Du Cange, s. v.

<sup>5</sup> It is very doubtful whether in some Aryan languages there has not been a confusion between the names for *elephant* and *camel*. See Pictet s. v. *Le Chameau*.

<sup>6</sup> See Plin. viii. 17. Fera=peregrina.

<sup>7</sup> *Prehist. Man*, i. 72.

<sup>8</sup> *Voyage of the Beagle*, p. 408.

<sup>9</sup> Michaelis, *De l'Influence des Opinions sur le Langage*.

<sup>10</sup> Seeman, *Mission to Viti*, pp. 45, 377.



called it '*manumanu*' (a *bird*), having never seen such a thing before; and money from the same cause they called '*ai Lavo*,' from its resemblance to the flat round seeds of the *Mimosa scandens*. The Dutch could find no better name than *Bosjesbok*, bush-goat, for the graceful African antelope; and in the Spanish name alligator we see that they regarded that unknown river-monster as a large lizard.<sup>1</sup> The New Zealanders called the first horses they saw 'large dogs,' as the Highlanders are said to have called the first donkey which they brought to their mountains 'a large hare.' The Kaffirs called the first *parasol*<sup>2</sup> to which they were introduced 'a cloud.' To this day the Malays have no better name for rat than<sup>3</sup> 'large mouse.' This, then, is an important principle to notice in all theories respecting language.

4. If, however, *none* of these processes furnish a convenient name for animals hitherto unfamiliar to new colonists—if the native name be too uncouth or difficult for adoption, and the animal offer neither a ready analogy, nor any very salient property, to provide itself with a new title—then a new name *must* be invented; and in this case we venture to assert that there is not to be found in any country *a single instance of a name so invented which is not an onomatopœia*. Such names as whip-poor-will, pee-whee (*Muscicapa rapax*), towhee (*Emberiza erythroptera*), kittawake (*Larus tridactylus*), &c., may be profusely paralleled; and in some cases the onomatopoeitic instinct is so strong that it asserts itself *side by side* with the adoption of a name; thus (as in the childish words moo-cow, bumble-bee) the North American Indian will speak of a gun as an *Ut-to-tah-gun*, or a *Paush-ske-zi-gun*. It has often been asserted that man has lost the power of inventing language, and this present inability is urged as a ground for believing that language could not have been a human inven-

<sup>1</sup> El lagarto, the lizard. See Farrar, *Origin of Lang.* p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Charma, *Or. du Lang.* p. 277, who refers to Condillac, *Gram.* ch. v.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford, *Malay Gram.* i. 68.

tion. We have elsewhere<sup>1</sup> given reasons for disputing the assertion, and even if it were true, it would be beside the mark, seeing that the absence of all necessity of exercise for a faculty is the certain cause of its all but irretrievable decay. From the fact, however, that when men *do* invent new words they are almost invariably onomatopœias, *we see an index pointing us back with unerring certainty to the only possible origin of articulate speech.* For whatever may be true of abstract 'roots,' it is demonstrable, and will be shown hereafter, that roots which by their onomatopoetic power are the only ones capable of *explaining and justifying themselves*, so far from being the sterile playthings which Professor M. Müller represents them to be, have in them a fertility and a power of growth which can only be represented by the analogy of vegetable life, and which is as sufficient to account for the full-grown languages of even the Aryan family as the germinative properties of an acorn are sufficient to account for the stateliest oak that ever waved its arms over British soil.

The history of colonisation, then, by reproducing some of the conditions of primitive man, enables us to see his linguistic instincts in *actual operation*, and those instincts undeniably confirm our theory by displaying themselves in the very directions which we have been pointing out. But we can offer yet another proof of the reasonableness of our view in certain languages of modern invention, to which we shall again allude. I mean the various argots of the dangerous classes throughout Europe. These languages have to fulfil the opposite conditions of being distinct to those who use them, and unintelligible to the rest of the world. And how do they effect this? Partly indeed by generalising the special, and specialising the general; partly by seizing on some one very distinct attribute and describing it, if necessary, by periphrases; but also in great measure by *the obvious resource*

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<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 68 sqq. A very few instances of invented words, with some remarks upon them, may be found, *Id.* pp. 60, 61.

of direct sound-imitation. Thus the German thief, no less than the English, calls a watch a *tick*, the French thief calls it *tocquante*; the Italian thief speaks of a pig as *grugnante*, the German as *grunnickel*, the English 'the grunting,' the French as *grondin*, &c. These languages must, from their very nature, remain uncultivated, and the consequence is that they abound in onomatopœia. In the English slang, a pulpit is a *hum-box*; carriages and horses are *rattlers* and *prads*. In the French argot the heart is *battant*; a sheep is *bêlant*; a grimace is *bobine*; a marionette is *bouis-bouis*; to die is *claquer*; a liar is *craquelin*; to drink a health is *cric-croc*; a skeleton-key is *frou-frou*; a glutton is *licheur*; a shoe is *paffe*; a soldier, by an onomatopœia which it would take too long to explain, is *piou-piou*; a little chimney-sweeper is *raclette*; a cab is *roulant*; a dog *tambour*; a noisy child *tarabate*; and gendarmes, from the songs which soldiers like, is called *tourlouru*. These are but a few instances out of many, and it is impossible to deny that they establish the necessity of having recourse to onomatopœia when new words have to be invented. They therefore furnish a fresh support to the views here advocated.

When by strict etymological laws we have traced back a word through all its various changes, instructive and valuable as the process is sure to have been, we have done nothing to *explain* its origin or to account for its earliest history, *unless* we can point to its ultimate germ in some onomatopœic or interjectional root; and perhaps in the *majority* of cases this can be done with a fair amount of probability; for the number of roots required for the formation of a language is extremely small; and that small number is amply supplied by the imitation of natural sounds, and by the instinctive utterances which all violent impressions produce alike in animals and in men. The reason why new words, except of an imitative kind, are *not* invented is because every word involves a long history from its sensational origin to its final meaning, and the result without the process is felt to be a contradiction and an impossibility. This is why all attempts

to frame an artificial language have been a failure, and the ponderous schemes of Kircher, and Becker,<sup>1</sup> and Dalgarno, and Wilkins, and Faignet, and Letellier can only move us to a smile, because they are based on a conventional theory of language which is utterly mistaken. This, too, is the reason why language is stronger than emperors, and Tiberius<sup>2</sup> could neither give the citizenship to a word, nor Claudius<sup>3</sup> procure acceptance even for a useful letter. A radically *new* word to have any chance of obtaining currency must of necessity be of an imitative character. It is a curious fact that some of the tribes<sup>4</sup> on the coast of New Guinea derive *even the names which they give to their children* from direct imitations of the first sounds or cries which they utter.

We are surely entitled then to draw secure inferences from the facts hitherto observed, and those inferences may be summed up in the observation that animals were among the first objects to receive names, and that, in the absence of any previous words, they *could* not have been named except by onomatopoeitic designations. This we have endeavoured to render strong and secure by many proofs, drawn both *à priori* from the nature of the case, and from the analogies presented by the methods in use among children and among savages; and *à posteriori* from the phenomena which have invariably recurred when, in the course of history, a condition of circumstances has been reproduced which in any way resembles that which must have existed in the case of primal man.

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of their systems see Du Ponceau, *Mém. sur le Syst. Gram. de quelques Nations Indiennes*, pp. 26-31, 320. Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* iii. 362; and Letellier, *Établissement immédiat de la Langue Universelle*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Tu enim Cæsar civitatem potes dare hominibus, verbis non potes,' said Capito to Tiberius.—Sueton. *De Illustr. Gram.*

<sup>3</sup> Claudius vainly tried to introduce into the Roman alphabet an antisigma  $\chi$ , with the value Ps. 'pro qua Claudius Cæsar Antisigma  $\chi$  hac figurâ scribi voluit, sed nulli ausi sunt antiquam scripturam mutare.'—Priscian, i. *De Literarum Numero et Affinitate*.

<sup>4</sup> Salverte, *Hist. of Names*, i. 62, *Engl. Transl.*

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE INFANCY OF HUMANITY.

\**Ἦν χρόνος δτ' ἦν ἀτακτος ἀνθρώπων βίος,  
Καὶ θηριώδης, ἰσχύος θ' ὑπηρέτης.*

. . . . . *τηνικαῦτά μοι δοκεῖ*

*Πυκνός τις ἄλλος καὶ σοφὸς γνῶμὴν ἀνὴρ*

*Γεγονέναι, ὃς . . . .*

. . . . . *τὸ θεῖον εἰσηγήσατο.*

IGNOT. *ap.* SEXT. EMPIRIC.

As we have here arrived at a sort of landing-place, we may devote a separate chapter to consider the full bearing of the conclusions thus formed. In so doing, we are not digressing from the main point, but rather we are removing a groundless prepossession which would lie in the road of all further advance, and we are at the same time calling attention to one of those important facts which it is the object of philology to illustrate or discover.

For, obviously, if language was a human invention, and was due to a gradual development, there must have been a time in man's history when he was possessed of nothing but the merest rudiments of articulate speech; in which, therefore, he must have occupied a lower grade than almost any existing human tribe. This is a conclusion which cuts at the root of many preconceived theories. Thus Lessing<sup>1</sup> remarks that God is too good to have withheld from His poor children, perhaps for centuries, a gift like speech; and M. de Bonald asks how can we suppose 'that a Good Being could create a social animal without remembering that he

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtl. Schriften*, Bd. x.

ought also from the first moment of his existence to inspire him with the knowledge necessary to his individual, social, physical, and moral life.' Such reasoners, therefore, reject the doctrine of the human origin of language as alike an injustice to God and an indignity to man.

In answer to such 'high priori' reasonings, it might be sufficient to say that we are content, for our part, humbly to observe and record what God *has* done, rather than to argue what He *ought* to do or ought not to do, incompetent as we are in our absolute ignorance 'to measure the arm of God with the finger of man.' Claiming for ourselves the character of observers only, and desirous to accept the results to which our enquiries directly lead, without any regard to system or prejudice, we might easily repudiate assumptions which rest on the mere sandy basis of systematic prejudice. It is childish arrogance in us to argue what plans are consonant to, and what are derogatory of, God's Divine Power and Infinite Wisdom. Seeing that we have not the capacity for understanding that which *is*, it is preposterous in us to argue on any general principles as to what *must* have been. Perfect humility and perfect faith—a faith in Truth, which seems to have the least power in many of the loudest champions of a supposed orthodoxy—are the first elements of scientific success. The problems and mysteries which encumber all our enquiries—the adamantine wall against which we dash ourselves in vain whenever we seek to penetrate the secrets of the Deity—should at least prevent us from following Lessing and M. de Bonald in laying down rules of our own, in accordance with which we fancy that God *MUST* inevitably have worked.

Moreover, if language was a Revelation and not an Invention, at what *period* in man's life was it revealed? If, indeed, man was, according to the Chaldee paraphrast, *created* 'a speaking intelligence' (see p. 9), we get over this difficulty, though it is only at the expense of an absurdity, and by making the Bible contradict itself. But if not, there must have been a time, on any supposition, when man

wandered in the woods a dumb animal, till God bethought Him of inspiring language. Surely such a view is even less pious than that of Lucretius himself. 'Any one,' says Steinthal,<sup>1</sup> 'who thinks of man without a language' [or, he should have added, the *capacity for evolving* a language] 'thinks of him as one of the Brutes; so that any one who calls down the Deity as his teacher of Language, gives Him only an animal as a scholar.' In other words, unless man was *born* speaking—(and it is apparent in Scripture that language was *subsequent* to creation)—then, even on this theory, man must have *once* been destitute of a language, and must, therefore, on this theory also, have emerged from a condition of mutism. Why then should a similar belief be held an insuperable objection to a theory so certain as the human discovery of language? It is, forsooth, an insult to the dignity of man and a slur on the beneficence of God to suppose that man appeared on this earth in a low and barbarous condition! But *why* is it? Do those who use such reasonings consider that they are thereby arraigning and impugning before the bar of their own feeble criticisms the *actual* dealings of God? If it be indeed irreconcilable with God's goodness to suppose that He would have created man in a savage state, is it *more* easy to believe that He would *now* suffer, as He *does* suffer, the existence of thousands who are doomed throughout life to a helpless and hopeless imbecility, and that for no fault of their own?—thousands in whom the light of reason has been utterly quenched; thousands in whom it never existed, and who pass in helpless idiocy from the cradle to the grave, as irresponsible as the brutes who perish, without language, without religion, without knowledge, without hope? Facts like these ought to silence us for ever when we attempt beforehand to assign limits to the possible workings of God's Providence. We *know* that He is infinitely good and gracious, but we *cannot* know how His Providence will work.

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<sup>1</sup> *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 40.

If for many ages millions of the human race have been, and still are, born into a low and barbarous condition, why may they not have been originally so created? We know from history and from ordinary reasoning that existing savage races could not have *sunk*<sup>1</sup> into this condition, and there seems every ground for believing that they are morally, mentally, and physically incapable of rising out of it, since they melt away before the advance of civilisation like the line of snow before the sunlight. 'God,' says M. Jules Simon,<sup>2</sup> 'who suffers millions of savages to exist in three quarters of the globe, may well be supposed to have permitted in the beginning that which He permits at the present day.' What shall we say, for instance, of the tallow-coloured Bosjesman,<sup>3</sup> who lives for the most part on beetles, worms, and pismires, and is glad enough to squabble with the hyæna for the putrid carcass of the buffalo or the antelope? Of the leather-skinned Hottentot,<sup>4</sup> 'whose hair grows in short tufts, like a worn-down shoe brush, with spaces of bare scalp between,' and who is described as a creature 'with passions, feelings, and appetites as the only principles of his constitution'? Of the Yamparico, 'who speaks a sort of gibberish like the growling of a dog,'<sup>5</sup> and who 'lives on roots, crickets,

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<sup>1</sup> Archbp. Whately (*Preliminary Dissert.* iii. in the *Encycl. Britannica*) argues that savages can never, *of themselves*, rise out of degradation; it is as easy to show that they can never *sink* into such a condition. We do not believe that the primeval savages were in any way direct ancestors of the two noble races—the Aryan and the Semitic.

<sup>2</sup> *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, 1841, p. 536.

<sup>3</sup> Caldwell, *Unity of the Human Race*, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> *Personal Adventures in S. Africa*, by Rev. G. Brown (a missionary), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> See some examination of the question about races with a deficient language in Mr. E. Burnet Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (p. 77 sq.), who also has some admirable chapters on gesture language, picture writing, &c. I am glad to find in his two chapters on myths abundant confirmations of the arguments which I have used in a paper on 'Traditions real and fictitious' in the *Trans. of the Ethnol. Soc.* 1865.



and several bug-like insects of different species' ?<sup>1</sup> Of the aborigines of Victoria,<sup>2</sup> among whom new-born babes are killed and eaten by their parents and brothers, and who have no numerals beyond three? Of the Puris<sup>3</sup> of Brazil, who have to eke out their scanty language by a large use of signs, and who have no words for even such simple conceptions as 'to-morrow,' and 'yesterday'? Of the naked, houseless, mischievous, vindictive Andamaner,<sup>4</sup> with a skull hung ornamentally round his neck? Of the Fuegians,<sup>5</sup> 'whose language is an inarticulate clucking,' and who kill and eat their old women before their dogs, because, as a Fuegian boy naïvely and candidly expressed it, 'Doggies catch otters, old women no'? Of the Banaks,<sup>6</sup> who wear lumps of fat meat, artistically suspended in the cartilage of the nose? Of the negroes of New Guinea,<sup>7</sup> who were seen springing from branch to branch of the trees like monkeys, gesticulating, screaming, and laughing? Of the Alforese<sup>8</sup> of Ceram, who live in trees, 'each family in a state of perpetual hostility with all around'? Of the forest tribes of Malacca,<sup>9</sup> who lisp their words, 'whose sound is like the noise of birds'? Of the wild people of Borneo,<sup>10</sup> whom the Dyaks hunt as if they were monkeys? Of the cannibal Fans<sup>11</sup> of equatorial Africa, who bury their corpses before

<sup>1</sup> Capt. Mayne Reid, *Odd Races*, p. 330 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> W. Stainbridge on the *Aborigines of Victoria*.—*Trans. of Ethn. Soc.* 1861, p. 289. Fern-roots, grubs, mushrooms, and frogs are their main diet; that of some other savages is too disgustful for utterance.—Greenwood, *Curiosities of Savage Life*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Mad. Ida Pfeiffer, *Voyage Round the World*.

<sup>4</sup> Mouatt's *Andamaners*, p. 328.

<sup>5</sup> Darwin, *Voyage of a Naturalist*, p. 214. The boy who gave the philosophic defence of cannibalism, imitated, as a great joke, the screams of the poor old women, while being choked in the smoke.

<sup>6</sup> Hutchinson, *Ten Years' Wanderings*, p. 245.

<sup>7</sup> Crawford, *Malay Gram.* i. clxi.

<sup>8</sup> Pickering, *Races of Man*, p. 304 sqq.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Du Chaillu's *Equatorial Africa*. This has been denied.

eating them? Of the pigmy Dokos,<sup>1</sup> south of Abyssinia, 'whose nails are allowed to grow long like the talons of vultures, in order to dig up ants and tear in pieces the flesh of serpents, which they devour raw'? Of the wild Veddahs<sup>2</sup> of Ceylon, who have gutturals and grimaces instead of language; 'who have no God; no idea of time and distance; no name for hours, days, or years; and who cannot count beyond five on their fingers'? Of the Miautsee,<sup>3</sup> or aborigines of China, whose name means 'children of the soil,' and who, like the Malagassy, the Thibetans, and many African tribes, attribute their origin not to gods and demigods, not even to lions (as do the Sahos), or to goats (as do the Dagalis), but with unblushing unanimity, to the ape? Of the Negrilloes of Aramanga, the Battas of Sumatra, the wild people of Borneo, the hairy Ainos of Jesso, the Hyglaus of the White Nile, the Kukies and other aborigines of India, even the Cagots and other Races Maudites of France and Spain? These beings, we presume no one will deny, are men with ordinary human souls. If then God can tolerate for unknown generations the perpetuation of such a state of existence as this—the perpetuation of people with squalid habits, mean and deformed heads, hideous aspect, and protuberant jaws—what possible ground is there for denying that He may also have suffered men at the Creation to live in what is called a state of nature, which is the name given to a state of squalor and ignorance, of savagery and degradation? Considering these facts, and believing with Schlegel that savage nations are

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<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *Nat. Hist.* i. 306. Norris's Note. Dr. Davy, *Researches*, ii. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Sir J. Emerson Tennent, *Ceylon*.

<sup>3</sup> Authorities for the facts mentioned in these two sentences will be found in Ritter, *Erkunde, Asien*, ii. 273, 431 sqq.; Hope, *Ess. on the Origin of Man*; Virey, *Hist. Nat. du Genre Humain*, ii. 12; i. 190. Pickering, *Races of Man*, 175-179, 302-308; *Journ. Asiat. Soc. of Bengal*, xxiv. 206; Pritchard, *Nat. Hist. of Man*, i. 250-274 (ed. Norris). Pouchet, *Des Races*, p. 59; Perty, *Anthropol. Vorträge*, p. 41; Michel, *Hist. des Races maudites*, &c.

savage by nature, and must ever remain so, some (and among them Niebuhr) have been polygenists precisely *because* they thought it was more consonant with God's attributes to have created men in different grades of elevation than to have suffered them to degenerate in so many regions from a condition originally exalted.<sup>1</sup> The argument in this case may be as worthless as in the other ; but what is the value of a method of reasoning from which two conclusions so opposite can be drawn!

It would be an error to suppose that 'the state of nature,' with its imperfect language, its animal life, its few natural wants, its utter ignorance, is necessarily a state so low as to render existence a misfortune or a curse. Nature, in all probability, provided as bountifully for her first-born as she does for many of his descendants ; and if not, she at any rate 'makes habit omnipotent and its effects hereditary.' Even the Fuegian, in his land of cold and rain—crawling from the lair in which he lies, unsheltered, coiled up like an animal on the wet ground, to gather at all hours, from morn till midnight, the mussels and berries which are his only food—does not decrease in numbers, and must, therefore, as Mr. Darwin observes,<sup>2</sup> be supposed 'to enjoy a sufficient share of happiness (of whatever kind it may be) to render life worth having.' It is hard to say how little is 'necessary' for man ; and it is certain, both from Scripture and history, that not only the luxuries and ornaments of life, but even those things which we regard as indispensable, were the gradual inventions, or long-delayed discoveries, of a race which had received from God certain faculties, in order that they might at once be exercised and rewarded by a perpetual progress in dignity and self-improvement. There can be no question that the systems of those Rabbis and Fathers,<sup>3</sup> and their modern imitators, who make Adam a

<sup>1</sup> Pouchet, *Plural. des Races*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Darwin, *Voy. of a Naturalist*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iv. 25, § 173 ; 23, § 152. Buddæus, *Philos. Hebr.* 383-388, where he gives the Rabbinic fancies about Adam.

being of stupendous knowledge and superhuman wisdom, are more improbable, as well as more unscriptural, than those of writers who, like Theophilus of Antioch among the Fathers, and Joseph Ben Gorion among the Jews, make his original condition a weak and inferior one. Philosophy, the arts, the sciences, the observations of the simplest natural facts, the elucidation of the simplest natural laws, required centuries to elaborate. We do not even hear of the first *kingdom* till some thousands of years after the first man. It is but as yesterday that man has wrung from the patient silence of Nature some of her most important, and apparently her most open secrets.

It is forsooth a degradation to suppose that man originated in an ignorant and barbarous condition! People prefer the poet's fancies:—

One man alone, the father of mankind,  
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed  
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw  
On all around him; learned not by degrees:  
Nor owed articulation to his ear;  
But, moulded by his Maker into man,  
At once upstood intelligent, surveyed  
All creatures; with precision understood  
Their purport, uses, properties; assigned  
To each his place significant; and filled  
With love and wisdom, rendered back to Heaven  
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.  
He was excused the penalties of dull  
Minority. . . . History, not wanted yet,  
Leaned on her elbow, watching Time, whose course  
Eventful should supply her with a theme.<sup>1</sup>

Fascinating and poetical, no doubt; the primal man, regarded as a being beautiful of body, gracious in soul,<sup>2</sup>

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Kadmon. Suidas *s. v.* 'Αδάμ. South, *State of Man before the Fall*, &c. On the other side see Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. 12, § 96; Greg. Naz. *Orat.* xxxviii. 12; and even Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.* iv. 38.

<sup>1</sup> Cowper, *The Task*.

<sup>2</sup> The Bible tells us nothing of this kind; but it would take us too long here to examine fully the Biblical data. I believe that when fairly

filled in heart with virgin purity and sweetness, and discovering everything with exquisite and lightning-like spontaneity! Nevertheless, 'Science<sup>1</sup> banishes amongst myths and chimeras the fancy of a primitive man, burning with youth and beauty, to show us upon icy shores I know not what abject being, more hideous than the Australian, more savage than the Patagonian, a fierce animal struggling against the animals with which he disputes his miserable existence.' What support is there for the poetic hypotheses of those who love their own assumptions better than they love the truths which science reveals? In a handful of rude and bizarre traditions, in a few skulls of the very meanest and most<sup>2</sup> degraded type, in here and there a gnawed fragment of human bones, in a few coarse and pitiable implements of bone and flint, what traces have we of that radiant and ideal protoplast whom men have delighted to invest with purely imaginary attributes, and to contemplate as the common ancestor of their race? But man, in his futile and baseless arrogance, must exalt the earliest representatives of his kind, though he cannot deny the infinite debasement of his cotemporary brethren. He refuses to see in his far-off ancestors what he *must* see in his living congeners, a miserable<sup>3</sup> population maintaining

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and thoroughly considered, they *sanction* the view here expressed. For a picture of frightfully degraded aboriginal races, see Job xxx. 1-8; Ewald, *Gesch. d. Volkes Israel*, i. 27; De Gobineau, i. 486.

<sup>1</sup> Aug. Laugel, *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, May I, 1863; cf. De Gobineau, *De l'Inégalité des Races*, i. 228; Link, *Die Urwelt*, i. 84; Lyell, *Princ. of Geol.* i. 178; Laugel, *Science et Philosophie*, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> It has even been suspected (most likely on insufficient ground), from the position of the *foramen magnum*, that the head was not vertical on the neck. See *Ethnol. Trans.* p. 269, 1863.

<sup>3</sup> It is agreed on all hands that Gen. i. 26, has no bearing on this question, since it refers to the moral and intellectual nature of man—reason, liberty, immortality. 'Non secundum formam corporis factus est ad imaginem Dei, sed secundum rationalem mentem.'—Aug. *de Trin.* xii. 7. Obviously, if all men—even Mundrucus and Ostiaks—are created in the 'image of God,' then the first men were so, however low their grade.

an inglorious struggle with the powers of nature, wrestling with naked bodies against the forest animals, and forced to dispute their cave-dwellings with the hyæna and the wolf.

Years pass before the infant can realise and express his own individuality; ages may have rolled away before those ancestors of man, who lived in the dim and misty dawn of human<sup>1</sup> existence, could in any way understand their own position in the yet untamed chaos of the ancient world. The recognition of the long and feeble periods of animalism and ignorance is no more degrading to humanity than the remembrance of the time when he was rocked, and swaddled, and dandled in a nurse's arms is a degradation to any individual man. Disbelieving, on the scientific ground of the Fixity of Type,<sup>2</sup> the Darwinian hypothesis, we should yet consider it disgraceful and humiliating to try to shake it by an *ad captandum* argument, or a claptrap platform appeal to the unfathomable ignorance and unlimited arrogance of a prejudiced assembly. We should blush to meet it with an anathema or a sneer; and in doing so we should be very far from the assumption 'that we were on the side of the angels!'

Is it not indisputable that man's body—'all but an inappreciable fragment of its substance'—is composed of the very same materials, the same protein and fats, and salines, and water, which constitute the inorganic world—which may unquestionably have served long ago as the dead material which was vivified and utilised in the bodies of extinct creatures—and which may serve in endless metempsychosis<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is a remarkable fact that native legends betray a reminiscence of the Elk, Mastodon, Megalonyx, Deinotherium, &c. Hamilton Smith, *Nat. Hist. of Human Spec.* pp. 104–106; Maury, *Des Ossements humains* (*Mém. de la Soc. des Antiq.* i. 287), &c.

<sup>2</sup> I may perhaps be allowed to refer to my paper on this subject read before the British Association in 1865, and now in the *Ethnolog. Soc.'s Transactions*.

<sup>3</sup> If the word, which has the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus, and which is now imperiously demanded by the wants of science, may be pardoned on the score of its necessity.

for we know not what organisms yet to come? Was there, or was there not, a time in the embryonic dawn of individual life, when every one of us drew the breath of life by means not of lungs but of a species of gills? Is this fact any disgrace to us, or will any pseudo-theologian have the dogmatic hardihood to deny it? Are we, in our gross and haughty ignorance, to assume that, because by God's grace we carry in ourselves the destinies of so grand a future, a deep and impassable gulf of separation must therefore divide even the material particles of our frame from those of all other creatures which find their development in so poor a life? What sanction have we for this assumption? Is it to be found in the future fate of the elements of our body—destined, as we know they are, to be swept along by the magic<sup>1</sup> eddy of nature, to be transmuted by her potent alchemy into nameless transformations, and subjected by her pitiless economy to what we should blindly consider as nameless dishonour? or, looking backwards as well as forwards, is it to be found in the fact that there are stages in the earlier development of the human embryo, during which the most powerful microscope, and the most delicate analysis, can neither detect nor demonstrate the slightest difference between the<sup>2</sup> three living germs of which one is destined to be a wolf, the second a horse, and the third a man? If the question *is* to be degraded from scientific decision into a matter for tea-table æsthetics and ignorant prepossessions, is this certain embryonic degradation of immaturity *less* oppressive than the admission of a bare possibility that, myriads of centuries ago, there may have been a near genetic connection between the highest of the animals and the lowest of the human race? It is not yet proved that there was; we believe that there was *not*; but, nevertheless, the hypothesis is neither irreverent nor absurd. Let those who love truth

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*; Huxley, *Lect.* pp. 15-19; *Hamlet*, v. i.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Snell, *Die Schöpfung des Menschen*, p. 130.

only consider what *are* the certain facts about our mortal bodies, and be still ;—awaiting the gradual revelation of His own past workings which the All-wise Creator may yet vouchsafe, not assuredly to the clamorous, the idle, and the ignorantly denunciative, but to humble and studious enquirers—to those loftier and less self-complacent souls, whom He has endowed with the desire, the wisdom, and the ability to search out the pathless mystery of His ways, through long years of noble and self-sacrificing toil.

It has, indeed, been asserted that the languages of some barbarous nations—for instance, the Greenlanders and the North American Indians—are of so rich, so perfect, and so artistic a structure, that they could not possibly have been achieved by them in their present condition, and furnish a proof that they have sunk into savagery from a state of higher culture. Du Ponceau<sup>1</sup> speaks in the most glowing terms of the genius displayed in the infinite variety and perfect regularity of those languages. Charlevoix calls attention to the beautiful union of energy and nobleness in the Huron, where, as in the Turkish, ‘tout se conjugue.’ Dr. James says that there are seven or eight thousand possible forms of the verb in Chippeway. Appleyard<sup>2</sup> tells us that ‘the South African languages, though spoken by tribes confessedly uncivilised and illiterate, are highly systematic and truly philosophical ;’ that in Kafir there are a hundred different forms for the pronoun ‘its,’<sup>3</sup> and that ‘the system of alliteration maintained throughout its grammatical forms is one of the most curious and ingenious ever known.’ Threlkeld<sup>4</sup> tells us similar facts about the Australian dialects ; and Caldwell,<sup>5</sup> in his ‘Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages,’ occupies many pages with the laws

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<sup>1</sup> Ét. du Ponceau, *Mém. sur le Syst. Gram. de quelques Nations indiennes*, passim. A most valuable and brilliant work.

<sup>2</sup> *Kafir Grammar*, pref.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 66 ; p. 6, note. &c.

<sup>4</sup> Threlkeld, *Australian Gram.* p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Dravidian Grammar*, pp. 126–138.



of euphonic permutation of consonants and harmonic sequence of vowels, which exist both in those and in the Scythian languages. Instances of similar exuberance and complexity in savage languages might be indefinitely multiplied:<sup>1</sup> and the argument that they imply an intellectual power superior to what we now find in these races, and that they therefore prove a condition previously exalted, is so plausible that in a former<sup>2</sup> work I regarded it as convincing. Further examination has entirely removed this belief. For this apparent wealth of synonyms and grammatical forms is chiefly due to the hopeless poverty of the power of abstraction. It would be not only no advantage, but even an impossible incumbrance to a language required for literary purposes. The 'transnormal' character of these tongues only proves that they are the work of minds incapable of all subtle analysis, and following in one single direction an erroneous and partial line of development. When the mind has nothing else to work upon, it will expend its energy in a lumbering and bizarre multiplicity of linguistic expedients, and by richness of expression will try to make up for poverty of thought. Many of these vaunted languages (*e.g.* the American and Polynesian)—these languages which have countless forms of conjugation, and separate words for the minutest shades of specific meaning—these holophrastic languages, with their 'jewels fourteen syllables long,' to express the commonest and most familiar objects—so far from proving a once elevated intellectual condition of the people who speak them, have not even yet arrived at the very simple abstraction<sup>3</sup> required to express the verb 'to be,'

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<sup>1</sup> Appleyard, p. 69; Du Ponceau, p. 95; Howse, *Cree Gram.* p. 7; Pott, *Die Ungleichheit d. menschl. Racen*, p. 253; Steinthal, *Charakteristik*, p. 176; Maury, *La Terre et l'Homme*, p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 28. See, too, Vater, *Mithrid.* iii. 328.

<sup>3</sup> In American and Polynesian languages there are forms for 'I am well,' 'I am here,' &c., but not for 'I am.' In Elliot's Indian Bible 'I am that I am,' is rendered 'I do, I do' (compare the French idiom '*il fait nuit*,' &c.) More than this, savage nations cannot even adopt the

4x which Condillac assumed to be the earliest of invented verbs! The state of these languages, so far from proving any retrogression from previous culture, is an additional proof of primordial and unbroken barbarism. The triumph of civilisation is not complexity but simplicity: and unless an elaborate Polytheism be more intellectual than Monotheism—unless the Chinese ideography, with its almost indefinite number of signs, be a proof of greater progress than our alphabet—then neither is mere Polysynthetism and exuberance of synonyms a proof of actual culture in the past, or possible progress in the future. If language proves anything, it proves that these savages must have lived continuously in a savage condition.<sup>1</sup>

I will here quote two high and unbiassed authorities in support of the same conclusion:—

‘It has already been observed,’ says Mr. Garnett,<sup>2</sup> ‘that very exaggerated and erroneous ideas have been advanced respecting the structure of the class of languages of which we have been treating in the present paper. They have been represented as the products of deep philosophical contrivance, and totally different in organisation from those of every part of the known world. The author of “Mithridates” regards it as an astonishing phenomenon that a people like the Greenlanders, struggling for subsistence among perpetual ice and snow, would have found the means of constructing such a complex and artificial system. It is conceived that there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that a complicated language is like a chronometer, or a locomotive engine, a product of deep calculation, and preconceived adaptation of its several parts to each other. The compound parts are

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verb ‘to be.’ A negro says, ‘Your hat no *lib* that place you put him in.’ ‘My mother done *lib* for devilly’ (=is dead).—Hutchinson, *Ten Years’ Wanderings*, p. 32.

<sup>1</sup> See among many other authorities Pott, *Die Ungl. der menschl. Racen*, p. 86; Du Ponceau, *Transl. of Zeisberger’s Lenni-Lenape Gram.* p. 14; Crawfurd, *Malay Gram.* i. 68; Adelung, *Mithrid.* iii. 6, 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Philological Essays*, p. 321.

rather formed like crystals, by the natural affinity of the component elements; and whether the forms are more or less complex, the principle of aggregation is the same.'

'In those which abound most in inflections,' says Mr. Albert Gallatin,<sup>1</sup> 'nothing more has been done than to effect, by a most complex process, and with a cumbersome and unnecessary machinery, that which, in almost every other language, has been as well, if not better performed by the most simple means. Those transitions, in their complexity, and in the still visible amalgamation of the abbreviated pronouns with the verb, bear, in fact, the impress of primitive and unpolished languages.'

Language, then, from whatever point of view we regard it, seems to confirm instead of weakening the inference to which we are irresistibly led by Geology, History, and Archæology—that Man,

The heir of all the ages in the foremost files of Time,

is a very much nobler and exalted animal than the shivering and naked savage whose squalid and ghastly relics are exhumed from Danish kjökken-möddings, and glacial deposits, and the stalactite flooring of freshly-opened caves. These primeval lords of the untamed creation, so far from being the splendid and angelic beings of the poet's fancy, appear to have resembled far more closely the Tasmanian, the Fuegian, the Greenlander, and the lowest inhabitants of Pelagian caverns or Hottentot kraals. We believe that in Scripture itself there are indications that they appeared upon the surface of the globe many ages before those simple and noble-minded shepherds from whose loins have sprung the Aryans and Semites—those two great races to whom all the world's progress in knowledge and civilisation has been solely due.

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<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia Americana*, ii. p. 203, quoted by Mr. Garnett.

## CHAPTER V.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DISTINCT THOUGHT.

Wenn ein unendlich Gefühl aufwogt in der Seele des Dichter's,  
 O dann mag er ahnen von fern das Geheimniss der Sprache,  
 Wie in der Zeiten Beginn aus dem erwachenden Geist,  
 Da er sich selbst und die Dinge vernahm, das lebendige Wort sprach  
 Offenbarung und That, göttlich und menschlich zugleich.

GEIBEL.

LANGUAGE may with more accuracy be called a Discovery or a Creation, than an Invention of the human race. Undoubtedly the idea of speech existed in the human intelligence as a part of our moral and mental constitution when man first appeared upon the surface of the earth. In *this* sense we may call language a divine gift, and may apply to it, with perfect truth, the passage of Tertullian: '*invenisse dicuntur necessaria ista vitæ, non instituisse; quod autem invenitur fuit, et quod fuit non ejus deputabitur, qui invenit, sed ejus qui instituit. Erat enim antequam inveniretur.*'<sup>1</sup>

But the germs may perish for want of development, and like the seeds in the diluvium, or grains of wheat in the hand of a mummy, may lie hidden for centuries before they meet with that combination of circumstances which is capable of quickening them into life. Yet we do not agree with Lessing in supposing that *if* man discovered language by the exercise of his own endowments, *i.e.* if he merely evolved the speech-power which existed within him as an immanent

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<sup>1</sup> *Apolog. adv. Gentes*, xi.

faculty, *long centuries* would necessarily have been required for the purpose. The wants of primitive men, like the wants of infants, are few and simple,<sup>1</sup> and wholly sensuous. It is certain, by universal admission, that the ultimate roots of language are *few in number*; it is nearly certain that no language possesses more than a thousand, and that some have far fewer. These roots we regard as mere etymologic fictions; but if, with Max Müller, we suppose that they were ever used as words, there *must*, even on this theory, have been a period when men used but a *few* words; and consequently, since the notion of any revelation of these roots is expressly repudiated, there must have been a time, however short, in which man had *no* words, no articulate language at all, and in which significant gestures could have been his only way for communicating his thoughts. And this time, however short, must also be postulated even if, in defiance of Scripture, it be supposed that language was revealed.

But *why* should it be held impossible that man once existed with nothing but the merest rudiments of speech? There are whole nations *even now* which, if the testimony of travellers is to be accepted, possess very little more. Nor, indeed, is it necessary to look to the remotest parts of the earth to find how very few are the words which are *necessary* to express the wants of man. Mr. D'Orsey mentions that some of his parishioners had not a vocabulary of more than 300 words; and although the assertion has been widely disputed, I should certainly be inclined to confirm it out of my own experience. I once listened for a long time together to the conversation of three peasants who were gathering

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Max Müller traces back all language to 'roots,' and there he would stop, declaring the use of them to be an ultimate and inexplicable fact. Inexplicable indeed! yet the 'theory of roots,' 'phonetic types,' incapable of further analysis, and, so far as appears, either wholly arbitrary, or else containing in themselves some mystic inherent fitness, is offered to us in the place of theories, so simple, so natural, and in part so *demonstrable*, as those which trace the rise and gradual growth of language out of onomatopœia and interjection.

apples among the boughs of an orchard, and as far as I could conjecture, the whole number of words they used did not exceed a hundred; the same word was made to serve a multitude of purposes,<sup>1</sup> and the same coarse expletives recurred with a horrible frequency in the place of every single part of speech, and with every variety of meaning which the meagre context was capable of supplying. Repeated observation has since then confirmed the impression. If this be so in Christian and highly-civilised England in the nineteenth century, what may not have been perhaps ten thousand years before the Saviour was born into the world?

If, then, man once existed with only the *germs* of speech and of understanding, to what was their development due? The question admits of distinct answer, and that answer is full both of interest and value.

The first men who ever lived must have learnt for themselves those simplest lessons which have to be learnt afresh by every infant of their race. Confused, yet lovely, was the multitude of influences and appearances by which they were surrounded; how should they thrid the all but inextricable mazes of impressions so manifold? Over their heads the sun, and moon, and the infinite stars of heaven,<sup>2</sup> rose and set in endless succession; the heavens outspread their illimitable splendour; woods waved, and waters rolled, and flowers exhaled their perfume, and fruits yielded their sweetness, and the hours of day and night and the four seasons of the year encircled them in their mystic dance. Had man been created unintelligent, and merely receptive, the waves of this vast tide of being must have broken over him in vain; and, in the absence of a living spirit, the world must have continued to seem unto all, save the Highest Being, a formless chaos—no better, for all its lustre and loveliness, than if the darkness had still brooded over the void abyss. But that

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<sup>1</sup> Just as in Chinese the same root may be a noun, a verb, and sometimes also a particle. Heyse, § 134.

<sup>2</sup> See a glorious passage of S. Chrysostom, *Or.* xii. 385, quoted by Lersch, i. 89; and Herbart, *Lehrb. d. Psychol.* p. 194.

soul, 'created in the image of God,' whose birth is recorded in the book of Genesis, bore no resemblance to the statue-man of Condillac's famous *Traité des Sensations*. Had it been so, the senses could only have produced a jarring multitude of heterogeneous impressions, and man would have continued to be that mere organised sensitive mass which Saint Lambert supposes him to be at the moment of his birth until 'Nature has created for him a soul!' For unless there had also been in man the 'intellectus ipse' of Leibnitz, unless there had been the intelligence, as well as the *sensorium commune*, even sensation would be impossible,<sup>1</sup> seeing that in the complex act which we call sensation man opposes the internal action of his conscious individuality to the influence of external causes. Without this apperception, there could be no such thing as self-conscious sensation,<sup>2</sup> nor could mankind ever have arisen to any higher region than that of mere organic impressions.

But although at first the intellect be but a passive and dormant faculty, it is *there*, and it is the sole clue wherewith we disentangle the myriad-ravelled intricacies of sensuous impressions. And thus the senses become the gateways of knowledge; and a man born without the capacity for external sensations would also be of necessity soulless and mindless, because, though not the *single source* of all our thoughts and faculties, the senses are yet the necessary

<sup>1</sup> Herbart, *Psychol.* p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> See Vict. Cousin, *Cours de Phil.* iii. passim. 'Sensation,' says Morell, 'is not purely a passive state, but implies a certain amount of mental activity. It may be described on the psychological side as resulting directly from the attention which the mind gives to the affections of its own organism. Extreme enthusiasm, or powerful emotion of any kind, can make us altogether insensible to physical injury.' Hence, a soldier, during the battle, is often unconscious of his wounds. 'Numerous facts of a similar kind proved demonstrably, that a certain application, and exercise of mind, on one side, is as necessary to the existence of sensation, as the occurrence of physical impulse on the other.'—*Psychology*, p. 107. In point of fact, some nations are as pre-eminent for the keenness of their senses as for the meanness of their intellect, which could not be the case if the senses created the intellect.

condition of their development. Thus it is that the senses, during the earliest days of man's existence, act the part of nursing mothers<sup>1</sup> to the soul, to which afterwards they become the powerful and obedient handmaids. They are the organs of communion between man and the outer world; they place him *en rapport* with it, uniting man to the Universe, and men to one another. Thus they baptize man as a member of the moral and physical cosmos, and awaken thereby the intellect, which would otherwise<sup>2</sup> remain infructuous, like an unquickened seed.

The first conception which man must learn is the conception of his own separate independent existence, and without this conscious distinction between the Ego and the Non-ego,—not indeed as a notion so clear and accurate as to admit of expression by the nominative of the personal pronoun, but as the general basis of all possible sensations,—he cannot advance a single step. And this lesson he learns by contact with the outer world, and mainly, beyond all doubt, from the organ of sight. At first he would regard himself (as all children do) rather as an object than a subject;<sup>3</sup> rather as 'me' than as 'I'; rather as *ὁδὲ* than as *ἐγώ*; rather in relation to others than as 'the machine which is to him, himself.' But even this elementary lesson is sufficient for the purposes of further education; and

As he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'  
And finds 'I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch :'

<sup>1</sup> Heyse, *l.c.*

<sup>2</sup> 'The earliest sign by which the Ego becomes perceptible is corporeal sensation.'—Feuchtersleben, *Med. Psychol.* p. 83, quoted by Fleming, *Vocab. of Phil.* p. 457.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Browning, with that rare metaphysical accuracy which characterises him, no less than the other great poet of our age, chooses the *third* person as the only appropriate one for the meditations of the semi-brutal Caliban.

'Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos ;  
*Thinketh* he dwelleth in the cold grey moon,' &c.  
*Theology in the Island.*



So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may begin,  
 As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined.<sup>1</sup>

The child, like the primal man, who has advanced thus far, learns with rapid and intuitive instinct to separate and discriminate between the many distinct and different impressions caused by physical contact with the outer world.

Thus, then, by means of an instinctive and reciprocal action, the senses develop the self-conscious individuality; and the self-consciousness, which contains indeed the germ of all intelligence, first quickens and then distinguishes, analyses, and combines, the impressions of those senses which have called it into life. And since two factors—the physical and the psychical—are indispensable to every true sensation, the two are so intimately related that, whereas without the psychical factor the physical could not exist, on the other hand, without the physical factor the psychical could not be developed. Speech is undoubtedly the product of the thinking spirit; but this spirit<sup>2</sup> received the first impulse of development from the impressions of the outer world and the needs of practical life.

At first, if we may trust the analogy of childhood, even sensuous influences must have been frequently repeated before they produced any definite impression. *Feeling*, which is a dull total impression, precedes sensation, to

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<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, xlv.

<sup>2</sup> Steinthal, *Grammatik, Logik, und Psychol.* 238 fg. Heyse, § 46. In this and the following remarks I have chiefly, though by no means exclusively, followed this wise and clear thinker. I fear that the unfamiliar words, intuition, representation, concept, &c., will render this chapter tedious to readers unaccustomed to metaphysical enquiry; but I thought it better to adopt them than to confuse matters by that excessive looseness of English philosophical terms which we chiefly owe to the vacillating usage of Locke. I am greatly indebted to Fleming's *Vocabulary of Philosophy*.

which indeed some of the lowest organisms can never attain at all; for, as we have seen already, an act of attention is required for every definite sensation, and it is not until after many sensations that we obtain a clear perception. 'Light<sup>1</sup> strikes on the infant retina; waves of air pulsate on the infant tympanum, but these as yet produce neither sight nor hearing; they are only the preparations for sight and hearing. . . . On the educated sense objects act so instantaneously as to produce what we call their sensations; on the uneducated sense they act only so as to produce a vague impression, which becomes more and more definite by repetition.'

It is not, however, *long* before the sensuous impression (*Sinnes-eindruck*) has kindled the electric fire of self-consciousness—in other words, the presentation soon becomes a perception or a sensation; for by a perception (*Wahrnehmung*) we mean a conscious presentation in reference to an object, and by a sensation (*Empfindung*) we mean a conscious presentation in reference to the modification of our own being. The impression on the senses, by calling into reciprocal action the two parts of our nature, produces a *sensation*, *i.e.* a certain conscious change in the state of our own minds; and these sensations rapidly give us a *perception*, *i.e.* they teach us something, which is at least subjectively true, respecting the qualities of matter.

But sensation and perception are common to man with the more intelligent animals, and the perfection of human reason enables us to advance further than this. Sensations tell us nothing about *objects*, but only about properties or attributes; we rise from sensations therefore to intuitions

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<sup>1</sup> Lewes, *Biog. Hist. of Phil.* p. 442. That attention is necessary even for a sensation, we may see from the fact that ordinarily (without a definite act of abstraction and observation) we are wholly unconscious of the numberless reflections of light, sound, smell, &c., which are playing on our senses. In fact, the phenomena of abstraction, reverie, preoccupation, *absence of mind*, &c., all point to this conclusion. See Sir H. Holland, *Chapters on Mental Physiology*.

(*Anschauungen*),<sup>1</sup> which are a complex of all the sensations caused by an object. Sensations are analytical; they come to us from different senses, and tell us the shape, colour, sound, weight, hardness, &c., of an object: the intuition gives us the object itself as the synthesis of all these separable attributes, so that gradually we grow familiar with the sensuous perception, in its totality, as a 'collective impression,' or definite picture, 'presented<sup>2</sup> under the condition of distinct existence in space or time;' and this we call an *Intuition*, i.e. according to the definition of Coleridge, 'a perception immediate and individual.'

And when this intuition has, by the power of abstraction, been raised into a complete picture, capable of being analysed into various elements, and is held fast in the consciousness as a permanent intellectual form, which may be banished and recalled *at will*, then we have a *Representation* (*Vorstellung*)<sup>3</sup>—the first permanent product of intellectual spontaneity, the first definite intellectual exertion of the will.

Lastly, by still higher processes of intellectual abstraction, in which the judgment for the first time plays a part, we raise the representation into the sphere of generality, and then possess a *notion or concept* (*Begriff*). A concept<sup>4</sup> grasps an object as the synthesis of all its constituent attributes or

<sup>1</sup> Steinthal, *Gram. Log. und Psychol.* 261. His general outline of the psychological process differs in some particulars from Heyse's. Mr. Mill (*Logic*, i. 58 sq.) briefly touches on the same subject. He only alludes to perceptions as *acts* of the mind 'which consist in the recognition of an external object as the exciting cause of the sensation.'

<sup>2</sup> Mansell, *Proleg. Log.* p. 9. We mean, of course, an 'empirical intuition,' which, in the Kantian philosophy, corresponds to the representation of a sensible object. German, *Anschauung*.

<sup>3</sup> Steinthal calls this *Anschauung der Anschauung*, i.e. a power of regarding the intuition (v. supra) as an Intuition, which is firmly fixed in the consciousness and memory. *Grammatik*, p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> 'Conception' should more accurately be used of 'the act of the understanding, bringing any given object or impression into the same class with any number of other objects or impressions, by means of some character or characters common to them all' (Coleridge, *Church and State*, *Prel. Rem.*); *concept* of the result of the act.

properties ; the Representation or image (*Vorstellung*) is subjective, and different people may have different images of the same object ; but the notion is the objective conception of the species, and being independent of all accidental marks of the individual representation, is and must be the same for all men. The *representation* is due to the analytic activity of Abstraction, but is entangled with the sensuous accidents of the individual object ; the notion (or concept) is the product of a higher creative activity of the thinking (logical) intelligence, and produces that ideal synthesis which enables us to think of a Genus or Species. It so far retrogrades to the concrete intuition as to reduce to unity a multitude of phenomena ; but this unity is not that of the immediate object, but one ideally recognised by the synthetic activity of the intellect. The *representation* is arrived at by a merely material analysis of the Intuition ; the *notion*<sup>1</sup> by a formal and logical analysis ; and distinct knowledge is impossible without notions, which are thus the commencement of the development of pure logical thought.

Nevertheless, words correspond *not* to notions, but to images or representations. They mark the object of perception, *not* in the totality of its essential attributes, but by some single mark whereby the image may be conceived and fixed in the intelligence. In fact, the representation (*Vorstellung*), which in ordinary, although not in philosophical language, is called the conception, is a mere *empirical* notion, derived from familiarity with the external properties of the object (*Anschauungsbegriff*, *Erfahrungsbegriff*), and this is what every word expresses. The *logical* conception may be indefinitely more accurate and profound, but must yet employ the same word for its expression. Thus, to men in general, 'bird' simply means a creature with wings ; nor would their rough definition of it exclude either butterflies

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<sup>1</sup> 'Notions, the depthless abstractions of fleeting phenomena, the shadows of flitting vapours, the colourless repetitions of rainbows, have effected their utmost when they add to the distinctness of our knowledge.' Coleridge.

or bats ; yet the man of science has no other word than this (bird), to express the complex of essential characteristics involved in the accurate definition. And the philosopher uses the word 'man,' no less than the world in general ; although the philosopher thereby expresses an idea which it exhausts his intellect to describe or to define, while the world merely implies by it the animal which Plato characterised as 'a featherless biped,' and which a modern philosopher has described as 'a forked radish with a curiously carved head.'

To illustrate this process : (i.) I see a bird flying, or a tree in bloom, and it makes a *sensuous impression* on my retina ; but if I am absent or preoccupied, I may be wholly unconscious of this impression, which does not become even a sensation until my consciousness is excited. But when this is done, when my Attention is drawn to it, I have (ii.) a perception (*Wahrnehmung*). When I contemplate this perception as an inward picture, mirrored in my consciousness, I have (iii.) the intuition (*Anschauung*) of the flying bird and the blooming tree. If, by abstraction, I separate this individual phenomenon in its concrete totality into its several component elements, and range those elements under some definite intellectual form as an ideal possession of my consciousness, I then have (iv.) the representations (*Vorstellungen*, vernaculé 'conceptions') of 'bird,' 'flying,' 'tree,' 'blooming.' But the analytic activity of the intelligence proceeds still further into particulars : it separates the elements of a representation, and apprehends them as so many independent representations. In the tree it distinguishes between leaf, twig, stem, root, and the properties of height, greenness, &c.—all of which furnish so many separate representations. It further distinguishes the species of a representation, such as tree, into oak, beech, pine, &c., each regarded as special representations, and recognised by specific signs ; all of which I bear in mind when I use the word 'tree,' which thus, by material analysis, becomes to me (v.) an empirical concept (*Erfahrungsbegriff*), formed by a

synthesis of observed characteristics, and expressing more or less adequately the nature of the object. Lastly, by still further acts of intellectual abstraction, I arrive (vi.) at the *logical notion* (*Verstandesbegriff*), which is no longer merely empirical or material, but which, by the synthetic activity<sup>1</sup> of the judgment, recognises the object as the sum-total of all those attributes (and those only) which constitute its essence.

Once more then. From passive receptivity I am awoken by sensuous impressions into free, spontaneous, creative activity, whereby I pass through the stages of sensation and perception to that of Intuition, in which I first become independent of the immediate effect of the external object on my senses, and then free myself from the dominion of the senses, and possess an inward picture which I can contemplate without any assistance from them. Still advancing, my intellect *creates* representations for itself, no longer merely retaining the sensuous picture, but forming it to an ideal existence, and using it as its own possession and its own production.

Sensations, Perceptions, Intuitions are individual and special in their character; but representations are general, and no longer refer to that which is single and concrete, or to the individual object of perception. In this sense all words are Abstracta. The real world of appearances, in which everything is individual, is recreated<sup>2</sup> by the intelligence into an ideal world of general conceptions.

Thus, then, we have traced the psychological growth of the concepts, which may be represented by language. A word is a recognised audible sign for a special definite Intuition or concept. From the genesis of the *concept* we pass to the genesis of the *sound* which is accepted as its sign; and the questions which we have to consider are, How does the sound originate, and what is the connection, if any, between these two elements, the intellectual and the

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 88.

sensual, the concept and the sound? We need not fear that all such questions are insoluble. Speech is the expression of the free intellect, and if the laws and processes of the intellect are capable of being conceived and understood, why should speech,<sup>1</sup> which is nothing miraculous, arbitrary, or accidental, but which is the natural organ and product of the intellect, be deemed incapable of similar comprehension?

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 20.

## CHAPTER VI.

## POSSIBLE MODES OF EXPRESSING THOUGHT.

He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.—PROV. vi. 13.

FROM what we have already observed, it is evident that every mode of expression serves only to describe internal sensations, not outward facts; it throws light on that which is subjective, not on that which is objective; it expresses *ourselves*, not the world around us; sensations, perceptions, intuitions, not external things.

But what is the *medium* of expression? Obviously it must have been one of the senses, which are the main gateways of knowledge, the portals of intercommunication between man and man, between men and the Universe around them.

It is *conceivable* that a language (*i.e.* a mode of communication) might have been invented which should use the medium of<sup>1</sup> the touch, the taste, or the smell. Yet such a language, in the case of the two latter, could not but be infinitely imperfect, difficult, and obscure, nor has the attempt ever been made. This is to a less degree the case with the touch. It is well known that among certain animals the touch *does* serve all necessary purposes of intercommunication. Bees, for instance, to mention but one notorious case, communicate to each other the death of the queen by a rapid interlacing and striking together of the

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 29; Charma, *Ess. sur le Lang.* p. 50.



antennæ. Nor is a tactile language wholly unknown to man. For instance, the Armenian merchants, as we are informed by the traveller Chardin, are able to inform each other of any modification in their bargains, however complex, without the notice of the purchaser, by holding their hands together under their mantles, and moving<sup>1</sup> them in a particular manner. Yet a language which required for its possible development a constant contact, could never serve the purposes of so elevated a being as man.

The two highest and most ideal senses remain, and these, as they affect the soul more nearly and powerfully than the others, were clearly the best adapted for the expression of thought, which is a modification of the intelligent subject. We find accordingly that all actual language addresses itself to the eye or to the ear.

For in point of fact Art may be regarded as a language. We have read of a sculptor who conveyed, by means of a statue, the intense impression produced in his mind by the dawn of a summer day; and there is scarcely a thought, an emotion, or a fact that may not be conveyed by painting. Imitation—a fundamental principle on which rests the possibility of any communication between two sentient beings—may appeal as directly to the eye as to the ear. Philomela effectually reveals, by the mute tapestry, her woven tale:—

Os mutum facti caret indice. Grande doloris  
Ingenium est, miserisque venit solertia rebus!  
Stamina barbaricâ suspendit candida telâ,  
Purpureasque notas filis intexuit albis,  
Indicium sceleris.<sup>2</sup>

Shakspeare's mutilated Lavinia does not lack the means of revealing the authors of the outrage she has suffered. Pic-

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<sup>1</sup> *Voy. en Perse*, iv. 267, ed. Rouen. 'The finger extended means ten; bent it means five; the bottom of the finger is one; the hand, a hundred; the hand bent, a thousand. By similar motions of the hand they indicate pounds, shillings, and pence—their faces all the while continuing to be expressionless and blank.'

<sup>2</sup> *Ov. Met.* vi. 38 sqq.

tures and hieroglyphics continue to this day among various Indian tribes, a sure method of reporting facts; and we know from history that a rude sketch first conveyed to Montezuma the ominous intelligence that men in strange vessels and of strange garb had landed on his shores. Nay, more, the mighty invention of a written alphabet has translated the sounds addressed to the ear into symbols for the eye; and one-half at least of the thoughts of other men, whereof we become cognisant from day to day, is conveyed to us through the medium of sight.

How easy and how natural would have been a language of gesticulation, addressed solely to the eye, is proved by the large use of gestures to supplement the lacunas of a miserable speech among some degraded savage tribes; as, for instance, the Delaware Indians, who count by raising their hands a certain number of times, striking them as many times as there are tens. With savages generally, *quot membra, tot linguæ*; and of course for the deaf and dumb an eye language is the only one that can exist. To them the 'parole manuelle'<sup>1</sup> is the only possible or intelligible speech, as it undoubtedly would be to the whole human race if the sense of hearing were to become extinct. And that such a language would be most rapidly developed, and would be the same throughout the globe, appears certain from the fact that deaf mutes from different countries can at once converse together with freedom, when their speaking countrymen can hold no communication;—and that many signs, even some which apparently are quite arbitrary,<sup>2</sup> are mutually intelligible to the deaf mute and the savage. Ælian<sup>3</sup> relates an amusing instance of such a result. The tyrant Tryzus, that he might repress all possible means of conspiracy, published an edict that his subjects were to hold no

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<sup>1</sup> An expression of Jamet (*Mém. sur l'Instr. des Sourds-muets*, p. 15), quoted by Charma, p. 187. Condillac called it 'langage de la danse.'

<sup>2</sup> See some curious confirmations and instances of this in Marsh's *Lectures*, ed. Smith, p. 486.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Var.* xiv. 22.

communication with each other, either in public or in private. The order was at once rendered nugatory by an extraordinary development of the power of expressing thought by signs and gestures. When even this mode of intercourse was forbidden by the suspicious despot, one of the citizens went into the forum, and, without speaking a word, burst into a flood of tears. He was soon surrounded by a weeping multitude, who flew upon the tyrant and his bodyguard when he advanced to scatter them, and vindicated by his assassination their liberty of speech!<sup>1</sup>

In truth, gesture is a most eloquent and powerful exponent of emotion, and may add almost incredible force to the utterance of the tongue. 'Every passion of the heart,' says Cicero,<sup>2</sup> 'has its appropriate look, and tone, and gesture; and the whole body of man, and his whole countenance, and all the voices he utters, re-echo like the strings of a harp to the touch of every emotion in his soul.' 'What would you have said had you heard the master himself?' exclaimed Æschines to the admiring Rhodians, who had just heard him read the mighty oration of Demosthenes on the Crown; and Demosthenes has doubtless told us one great secret of that eloquence which

Fulmin'd o'er Greece, and shook the Arsenal  
To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne,

when he defined gesticulation as the first, the second, and the third qualification of the successful orator. Who that in

<sup>1</sup> See some excellent remarks in Marsh's *Lectures*, pp. 486-488. 'The language of gesture,' he says, 'is so well understood in Italy, that when King Ferdinand returned to Naples after the revolutionary movements of 1822, he made an address to the lazzaroni from the balcony of the palace, wholly by signs, which, in the midst of the most tumultuous shouts, were perfectly intelligible to his public. And it is traditionally affirmed that the famous conspiracy of the Sicilian vespers was organised wholly by *facial* signs, not even the hand being employed.'

<sup>2</sup> *De Oratore*, iii. 216.

modern days has seen a Kemble or a Siddons, a Rachel, a Helen Faucit, or a Ristori, can be ignorant of what a language may be uttered by every motion and every look? Yet it is probable that even the first of our modern actors falls short in this respect of the skill of the ancient pantomimes, of whose 'loquacissimæ manus, linguosi digiti, silentium clamosum, expositio tacita,' Cassiodorus<sup>1</sup> gives so lively a description.

These may have been the considerations which led Isaac Vossius deliberately to give the preference to gesticulation over language, and to regret that the whole human race does not banish 'the plague and confusion of so many tongues,' and adopt an universal and self-evident system of signs and pantomimic expression.<sup>2</sup> 'Nunc vero,' he continues, 'ita comparatum est ut animalium, quæ vulgo bruta creduntur, melior longe quam nostra hâc in parte videatur conditio, utpote quæ *promptius et forsân felicius sensus et cogitationes suas sine interprete significant, quam ulli queant, mortales (!), præsertim si peregrino utatur sermone.*'<sup>3</sup> Idle as the complaint may be, it is founded on the fact that gesture is in many cases more rapid and intense in the effect which it produces than words themselves. The sidelong glance, the drooping lid, the expanded nostril, the curving lip are more instantaneously eloquent than any mere expression of disdain;<sup>4</sup> and the starting eyeball and open mouth tell more of terror than the most abject words. M. Charma tells an anecdote of the actor Talma that, disgusted at the disproportion of praise which was attributed to the words of the poets, by which in the theatre he produced such thrilling

<sup>1</sup> Var. iv. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Many an amusing story has been told of the facility with which by such means of expression Englishmen have travelled all over the Continent with no fragment of any language except their own.

<sup>3</sup> Is. Vossius, *De Poematum Cantu*, p. 66, Oxon. 1673. It was the love of paradox, apparent in this passage, that led Charles II. to say of Voss that he believed everything *except* the Bible!

<sup>4</sup> See Charma (*Ess. sur le Lang.* p. 21), who has treated this subject admirably.

effect, he one day, in the midst of a gay circle of friends, suddenly retreated a step, passed his hand over his forehead, and gave to his voice and figure the expression of the profoundest despair. The assembly grew silent, pale, and shuddering, as though Œdipus had appeared among them, when, as by a lightning-flash, his parricide was revealed to him, or as though the avenging Furies had suddenly startled them with their gleaming torches. Yet the words which the actor spoke with that aspect of consternation and voice of anguish formed but the fragment of a nursery song, and the effects of action triumphed over those produced by words.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, easy to see that gesture could never be a *perfect* means of intercommunication. Energetic, rapid, and faithful, it is yet obscure because it is sylleptic, i.e. it expresses but the most general facts of the situation, and is incapable of distinguishing or decomposing them, and wholly inadequate to express the delicate shades of difference of which every form of verbal expression is capable. The flashing of a glance may belie years of fulsome panegyric; a sudden yawn may dissipate the effect of a mass of compliments poured out during hours of simulated interest; an irrepressible tear, a stolen and smothered sigh, the flutter of a nerve, or the tremble of a finger, may betray the secret of a life which no words could ever have revealed.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Garrick on rare occasions used, as he called it, 'to go his rounds,' i.e. to make his face and gestures assume in succession the aspects produced by the whole round of passions and emotions, from simple good humour to that of profound despair.

<sup>2</sup> 'Whereto the Queen agreed

*With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seemed her statue, but that he,  
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kissed her feet  
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.'*

Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, p. 208.

veiled and silent figure of Niobe may be more full of pathos than the most garrulous of wailing elegies. The wounds of the victor of Marathon, or the maimed figure of the brother of Æschylus, the unveiled bosom of Phryne, or the hand pointing to the Capitol which Manlius had saved, may have produced effects more thrilling than any eloquence; but such appeals were only possible at moments of intense passion, or under a peculiar combination of circumstances. The ancient orators, well aware of the power which lies in these mute appeals, made them gradually ridiculous by the frequency with which they employed them; and the introduction of a weeping boy upon the rostrum would produce but little weight when many of the audience knew that weeping may express a wide variety of emotions, and when an injudicious question as to the obscure cause of those moving tears might elicit the mal-à-propos complaint '*Se ex pædagogo vellicari.*'<sup>1</sup>

In moments of extreme passion, then, a language of gesture, a language appealing to the eye rather than the ear, is not only possible but extremely powerful, and one which will never be entirely superseded. And possibly some natures may be so sensitive, some faces so expressive, that even during the most peaceful and equable moments of life the passing thought may touch the countenance with its brightness or its gloom. But this could never be the case with any but a few; and even with these, what attention would be found equal to read and interpret, without fatigue, symbols and expressions so subtle and so fugitive? Moreover, to the blind, and to *all* during the darkness, and whenever an opaque body intervened, and whenever the face was turned in another direction, such language would instantly become impossible. It is incapable of representing the distinctness and successiveness of thought; it is

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<sup>1</sup> 'Puer, quid fletet, interrogatus, se ex pædagogo vellicari respondit.' *Quint.* vi. 1. On the adoption of this trick before the dikasteria, see Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 568-571.

limited on every side by physical conditions ; it requires an attention too exclusive and intense ; it would reach a shorter distance,<sup>1</sup> and appeal to a less spiritual sense.

For though *both* Sight and Hearing are ideal senses, as distinguished from the inferior ones of touch, taste, and smell, Hearing is more ideal in its nature, and reaches more nearly to the soul than Sight. It is the clearest, liveliest, and most instantaneously affected of the senses. That which is seen is material,<sup>2</sup> and remains in space, but that which is heard (although in reality as permanent and as corporeal) yet to our blunt senses has a purely ideal existence, and vanishes immediately in time. Hence sound is especially adapted to be the bearer, and the ear to be the receiver of thought, which is an activity requiring time for its successive developments, and is therefore well expressed by a succession of audible sounds. Juxtaposition in *space* appealing to the eye could only remotely and analogously recall this succession in time. Moreover, hearing requires but the air, the most universal of all mediums, the most immediate condition of life ; whereas the eye requires light as well, and is far more dependent on external accidents. The fact that even a sleeper is instantly awake to consciousness by the tremor of his auditory nerve under the influence of the voice, is a proof of the impressive and immediate adaptability of sound to the exigencies of the intellectual life. So that hearing is the very innermost of the senses, and stands in the strictest and closest connection with our spiritual existence. The ear is the ever-open<sup>3</sup> gateway of the soul ; and, carried on the invisible wings of sound,<sup>4</sup> there are ever thronging through its portals, in the guise of living realities, those things which of themselves are incorporeal and

<sup>1</sup> Charma, p. 51. Heyse, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Heyse, 29 ; and see some beautiful remarks in Herder's *Abhandlung über d. Urspr. d. Sprache*, s. 101-108.

<sup>3</sup> Heyse, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Ἑπεα πτερόεντα, or (as Horne Tooke called his famous work) language not only the vehicle of thought, but the wheels.

unseen. Wonderful, indeed, that a pulse of articulated air should be the only, or at any rate the most perfect means wherewith to express our thoughts<sup>1</sup> and feelings! Without its incomprehensible points of union with all that passes in a soul which yet seems so wholly dissimilar from it, those thoughts and emotions could perhaps have no distinct existence—the exquisite organism of our hearing would have been rendered useless, and the entire plan of our existence would have remained unperfected!

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<sup>1</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Gesch. d. Menschheit*, p. 190.



## CHAPTER VII.

## SOUND AS THE VEHICLE OF THOUGHT.

‘Words are the sounds of the heart, and writings its pictures.’  
YANGTSEE.

A GREAT part of the world around us is inanimate and dumb; yet such is the nature of all substances<sup>1</sup> that, by means of sound, we can interpret to the intellect their innermost peculiarity and constitution, even when light is absent, or the eye is most easily deceived. The inward shudder or oscillation of the component parts, even of lifeless objects, produced by any mechanical or external interference, betrays to us at once the degree of cohesion and homogeneity between the component particles, and some of their most general and necessary properties. There is, as might have been expected, a close analogy between the phenomena of Light and those of Sound. Thus *Sound*,<sup>2</sup> in general, corresponds to *Sheen*; Clear Sound to *Brightness*; *Echo* to *Reflection*; *Noise*, a confused indistinct sound, to *Glimmer*; *Clang*, a steady, pure, homogeneous sound, to *Glow*; *Tone*, which is the element of music, and is derived from *τῆσις* because it depends on the greater or lesser tension by which it is produced, corresponds to *Colour*, and the relations between the different colours in a picture no less than those between the

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<sup>1</sup> In the earlier part of this chapter I am mainly following the guidance of Heyse (*Syst. d. Sprachwissenschaft*, § 16), but I generally use my own words, because I have sometimes to amplify and more often to condense.

<sup>2</sup> Schall, Schein; Hall, Helle; Wiederhall, Widerschein; Geräusch, Schimmer or Geflimmer; Klang, Glanz; Ton, Farbe.

different intervals and harmonic relations of sound in music, are expressed by the word *Tone*.

All these kinds of sound are produced out of lifeless substances by mechanical influence ; but they all differ from *articulate* sound, and from all sound which is the dynamic product of the animal organism. For sound, thus spontaneously produced, the Germans reserve the word *Laut*, for which we have no exact English equivalent, unless we choose a special sense of the word utterance.

Voice (*Stimme*) is the capacity of dynamic sound-production, but in English is chiefly used of man alone. The lower order of animals, which have no lungs, and fish, whose element is the water which is not a conductor of voice, are dumb. The higher animals have each their own utterance, by which they are recognisable, and by which they recognise each other. It has generally been asserted, and it is repeated by Heyse, that we cannot speak properly of a *language* of animals, because their utterances only express a general consciousness of existence, or at the best but a few sensations, a few longings and desires of the animal life ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ), which, even in their highest possible development—even in the song of the nightingale—cannot attain to the expression of anything individual. With this conclusion, so like a thousand other hasty assertions<sup>1</sup> of human dogmatism, it is not necessary to agree, but, in order not to break the continuity of the subject, I have relegated all further examination of it to another place.

Man possesses a voice,—a capacity for the dynamic production of sound,—as a mere animal Being in the yet dark and unconscious slumber of natural Life. The new-born infant enters the world with a cry, which is a mere natural sound, the expression of animal feeling, and is soon liable to various modifications for the purpose of expressing the different stirrings of life and sensation. These natural sounds

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<sup>1</sup> See a paper on 'The Distinction between Animals and Man,' in the *Anthropological Review*, No. 5.

are no more speech than the cries of animals are ; no human intelligence is expressed by them ; and the origin of rational language cannot be explained by them *alone*. They are inarticulate and involuntary ; they are mere modifications of the breath, and do not express the thinking spirit. Nevertheless, they prove the possession of a high capacity, and this capacity is developed by man into significant speech, as the expression of his highest and innermost nature. His voice, independently of the words it utters, is capable, by natural flexibility, of expressing every variation of emotion, in all degrees of intensity ; and by virtue of the penetrating nerve-shaking influence of sound upon the soul, it can convey to others a sympathy<sup>1</sup> with the same feelings, and the impression of a free activity. It instantly and involuntarily stirs the attention of the hearer by an energy which, like that of the soul itself, is to the highest degree varied, energetic, and effectual, yet is at the same time ideal and unseen. The voice, then, by a natural necessity, by an organic connection, is the organ of the understanding ; and speech is the expression of the thinking spirit in articulate sounds. The union in speech of sound and sense, the combination of the phonetic and the intellectual elements into one organic unity, will be the subject of our enquiry hereafter. At present we must say a few words on the mechanical means by which the emission of the voice is rendered possible.

The voice of man is produced by a machinery far more exquisite<sup>2</sup> and perfect than that possessed by any other animal. The Larynx, with its cartilages and muscles, forms, in point of fact, a combination of musical instruments ; it is

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<sup>1</sup> The power of influencing by the *voice* is found in all, but in very different degrees. Few had it in greater perfection than Dr. Chalmers, who, we are told, moved a whole congregation to tears by the few simple words, 'It was because God was very good to him.' Every one has experienced the effect of what Lamartine beautifully calls 'the gift of tears in the voice.'

<sup>2</sup> Ladevi-Roché, *De l'Orig. du Lang.* p. 49 ; et ibi Bossuet, *Connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même*, p. 194.

at once a trumpet, an organ, a hautboy, a flageolet, and an Æolian harp. 'The air passing upwards and downwards through the larynx and trachea,<sup>1</sup> forms its analogy with the wind-instruments; the vibration of the *chordæ vocales*, its resemblance to the stringed.' 'The voice<sup>2</sup> is produced by the larynx, which is situated beneath the base of the tongue, and in front of the pharynx. The sides of the larynx are formed by the two large thyroid cartilages, which rest on the annular cricoid cartilage. On the upper surface of the back of the cricoid cartilage are mounted two small cartilaginous bodies, called the arytenoid, which are moveable in various directions by various muscles. To these arytenoid cartilages are attached two ligaments of elastic fibrous substance, which pass forward to be attached to the front of the thyroid cartilage, where they meet in the same point. These are the instruments concerned in the production of sound, and also in the regulation of the aperture by which air passes into the trachea; and they are termed *vocal chords*. By the meeting of these ligaments in front, and their separation behind, the usual aperture has the form of a V; but it may be narrowed by the drawing together of the arytenoid cartilages until the two vocal ligaments touch each other along their whole length, and the aperture is completely closed. In ordinary breathing the arytenoid cartilages are wide apart; but for vocal sounds it is necessary that the aperture should be narrowed, and that the flat sides rather than the edges of the vocal ligaments should be opposed to one another. When the ligaments are brought into position, by the contraction of certain muscles, the air, in passing through the larynx, sets them in vibration, in a manner very much resembling that in which the reed of a hautboy or clarionet, or the tongue of an accordion or harmonium, is set in vibration by the current of air made to

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<sup>1</sup> Hilles, *Essentials of Physiology*, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> I have abridged this account from Dr. Carpenter's *Animal Physiology* (p. 528), generally using his own words.

pass beneath them. The *rapidity* of the vibration, and consequently the *pitch* of the sound, depends on the degree of tension of the vocal ligaments.' 'When we reflect,' says Mr. Hilles,<sup>1</sup> 'that the range of the human voice will extend, although rarely, to the compass of two octaves, and that in this range are included, in some singers, as many as 2,000 minor tones, we shall form some idea of the extreme delicacy of motion, of which the laryngeal muscles are capable when fully educated.'

The elementary sounds of which the voice is capable are about twenty in number,<sup>2</sup> and it is easy to see that the permutations and combinations of these sounds are amply sufficient to provide the world with an infinite variety of languages. The elements of articulate sound are three--  
1. The aspirate,<sup>3</sup> which is a mere strengthened expiration ;  
2. The vowel sounds, produced by a *continuous* stream of air passing through the trachea, and modified only by the form of the aperture through which they pass ; and 3. The consonants,<sup>4</sup> for the utterance of which is required a partial or complete interruption of the breath in its passage through the organs in front of the larynx. These are of two kinds, viz. those<sup>5</sup> of which the sound can be prolonged, and the *explo-*

<sup>1</sup> *Ubi supra*, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Harris, *Hermes*, ii. 2, 3rd ed. p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Heyse, p. 74. In pp. 78, 79, Heyse traces what he supposes to be the natural connection of the vowels with various emotions ; he admits, however, that language in its final stage confuses and neglects these primitive relations of sound to emotion, and makes the vowels mere signs in the service of the free understanding. Hence it is in interjections and other primitive words that we must study their original value. But alike for vowels and for consonants such enquiries seem to me both dubious and difficult.

<sup>4</sup> Hence it is in the use of consonants, speaking generally, that the sounds uttered by animals differ from the articulate human voice. Aristotle speaks of *οι ἀγράμματοι ψόφοι οἷον θηρίων*, *Probl.* xi. 57. They have but one or two consonants at most. *Id.* x. 39. R, for instance, is called 'litera canina.' 'Irritata canis quod rr quam plurima dicit.' Lucilius. 'R is for the dog.' Shaks.

<sup>5</sup> Carpenter, *l.c.*

*sive* consonants (*b, p, d, t, g, k*), which require a *total* stoppage of the breath at the moment previous to their pronunciation, and which therefore cannot be prolonged. The sound of the former is modified by the position of the tongue, palate, lips, and teeth, and also by the degree in which the air is permitted to pass through the nose.

Now, the natural sensuous life expresses itself in three kinds of natural sound, viz. Interjections, Imitations, and those sounds, expressive of some desire, which in imitation of the German *Lautgeberden*<sup>1</sup> we may roughly designate as vocal gestures. Aspirates and vowels are generally sufficient to express the mere passing emotions of the natural life; consonants are more the expression of the free intelligence. *Interjections* are the arbitrary expression of subjective impressions; *Imitations* advance a step further, spontaneously reproducing something which has influenced the senses from without; *Lautgeberden*, though like interjections they have their source in the subject, are not a mere utterance of passive sensation, but an energetic expression of will, though as yet only in the form of desire.

At present, it will be observed, we are only dealing with the *elements* of articulate speech; the natural sounds out of which, by the aid of the understanding, perfect language is developed, and which in themselves are the mere expressions of animal feeling. In tracing the physical development of sound which corresponds to the psychical development of thought, we have not yet got beyond the means of finding vent for the sensuous impression, or at most the conscious perception. We have not even arrived at the *root*, which corresponds, in the development of sound, to the intuition (*Anschauung*) in the development of thought. The *word* which corresponds to the representation (*Vorstellung*) is beyond the vocal elements which we have yet reached. The further steps of the Process, which are as yet unexplained, will become evident as we proceed.

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 71.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## INTERJECTIONS.

Ὡς διδάσκει Ἐπίκουρος—φύσει ἐστὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, ἀποβήξαντων τῶν πρώτων ἀνθρώπων τινὰς φωνὰς κατὰ τῶν πραγμάτων.—ORIG. *c. Cels.* i. 24.

THE theories of the interjectional and onomatopoetic origin of language *are not in reality different, and both of them might without impropriety be classed under the latter name*; for, in point of fact, the impulsive instinct to reproduce a sound is precisely analogous to that which gives vent to a sensation by an interjection. When we see a person laugh or yawn we can hardly help following their example, not from an instinct of imitation, but from a nervous sympathy; and the same nervous sympathy<sup>1</sup> forces a child to reproduce any sudden sound which is not beyond its power of articulation, as any one may see who cares to try the experiment. This result, no less than the utterance of a cry of joy or pain, arises from a purely physical cause, namely, the general influence on the nerves communicated to the delicate organs by which the voice is produced. The reason why children and savages are more given to imitative and interjectional sounds is because of the greater delicacy and sensibility of their nervous organisations. Nevertheless, while aware of this fact, I have preferred, for the sake of clearness, to treat separately of these two phonetic elements; and first of Interjections.

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<sup>1</sup> Wüllner, *Ueber d. Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 6, fg.; Poggel, *Ueber das Verhältniss zwischen Form und Bedeutung*, § 5, 6.

Interjections<sup>1</sup> are of two kinds ; namely,

1. Those which are caused by some inward sensation, such as the cry of anguish, and the exclamation of joy ; sounds of the voice, which are neither definite in origin nor distinct in articulation, but are perfectly vague both as to the form they assume and the source from which they arise ; and,

2. Those which are evoked by some external impression, especially by perceptions of the ideal senses, sight and hearing. These stand on a higher stage than the last. They do not indeed, like imitations, express the *external* character of the thing perceived, but the inward excitement of the soul in consequence of the perception, whether it assume the form of astonishment, pleasure, surprise, disgust, or fear. In these the sound of the voice receives a more specific limitation, and vowels and aspirates are distinctly uttered.

We do not purpose to trace in the half-obliterated records of language the natural connection between particular vowel-sounds and particular sensations ; but it seems clear that by the very constitution of man certain sounds *are* the natural and almost necessary exponents of certain conditions. There are certain 'inarticulate bursts of feeling not reacted on by the mind.'<sup>2</sup> This will appear at a glance if we compare the interjections of a Semitic with those of an Aryan language, and observe their almost complete identity. Thus, for instance, the הָהָ, אָהָ, and אָהָה which occur in the Hebrew of the Bible (Ez. xxx. 2, vi. 11 ; Mic. ii. 7), are the same expressions of astonishment, fear, pleasure, or indignation which we find in the Latin hahe, aha, &c., and which in so many Aryan dialects are worn down to the mere O of the

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 72, § 27. There is some meaning in the verse of Dr. King :

' Nature in many tones complains,  
Has many sounds to tell her pains ;  
But for her joys has only three,  
And those but small ones, Ha ! ha ! he !'

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's *Hebrew Grammar*, § 440.



vocative case. The הוּ is 'the obscure deep sound of seriousness, of threatening, or lamentation,' and is therefore like the Greek οὐαί, the Latin heu, eheu, vœ in different circumstances.<sup>1</sup> The more definite expression of lamentation, הוּדָהוּ (Am. v. 16), offers an obvious analogy to the Latin ohe, while the אֲבוּי (Prov. xxiii. 29), הִי (Ez. ii. 10), and אֲלֵלֵי (Mic. vii. 1; Job x. 15), are almost identically the same with αἰβοῖ, papæ, phui, ἐλελεῦ, and even the Irish whilleleu! We find the same exclamations, Ha! ha! for surprise, Au-é! for sorrow, Abah! for disgust, among the New Zealanders;<sup>2</sup> and the Australian Ala! differs little either in sound or meaning from the English Hallo!

Latin is particularly rich in genuine interjections; and, besides this, Latin, Greek, English, and nearly all languages have a number of words which, although used interjectionally, are not really to be classed under this head, like the Hebrew הֲלִילָהּ מִי יִגְדֹּל, 'God forbid!' Such are the Latin malum! nefas! macte! amabo! age, sodes, sis, nœ, profecto, &c., some of which are verbs, and some are adverbs. Such too are the Greek ἄγε, φέρε, ἴθι, ἄγρευ, δεῦτε, &c., and the English strange! hark! adieu! welcome! the deuce! Very many of such spurious interjections are explicable by some ellipse; they are in fact abbreviated sentences as much as the single letter O (or οὐ) for οὐ, 'not!' with which the poet Philoxenus<sup>3</sup> is said to have replied in writing to the tyrant Dionysius, who had invited him to the court of Syracuse. Under this head fall a large number of

<sup>1</sup> See, too, Glass, *Phil. Sacr.* lib. iv. tract. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. Miss. Soc. *New Zealand Gram.* p. 57. Threkeld's *Austral. Gram.* p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Egger, *Notions Élév. de Gram. Comp.* p. 103. It is curious to see how a spurious interjection like Alas! which comes from the exclamation *Ai lassa*, 'ah, me weary!' in the songs of the Provençal troubadours, is never used by the common people. They instinctively recognise its artificial and aristocratic origin, just as they substitute 'the Fall,' 'Harvest,' &c., for the only Latin name of a season, Autumn.

abbreviated oaths and exclamations, such as *eccere*, *epol*, *mehercle*, *medius fidi*, for *per ædem Cereris*, *Pollucis*; *ita me Hercules*, *Dius filius*, *juvet*, &c.<sup>1</sup>

The Greeks, not very accurately, reckoned interjections under the head of *adverbs*; the Latins, correctly observing that the interjection is, as it were, *flung into* the sentence (inter jacio), and is quite capable<sup>2</sup> of expressing some emotion even if no verb be added, placed them separately as a distinct part of speech. This classification has given rise to the most amusing vehemence of argument. The interjection, it is asserted, is incapable of grammatical analysis, and belonging to the inarticulate cries and sounds of instinctive language it is also incapable of etymology, and stands in no syntactical relation to the rest of the sentence. Horne Tooke bewails that ‘the *brutish inarticulate Interjection*, which has nothing to do with speech, and is only the miserable refuge of the speechless, has been permitted, *because beautiful and gaudy*, to usurp a place amongst words, and to exclude the Article from its well-earned dignity.’ And when asked, ‘Why such bitterness against the interjection?’ he replies, ‘*Because the dominion of speech is erected upon the downfall of interjections*. Without the artful contrivances of language, mankind would have nothing but interjections with which to communicate, orally, any of their feelings. The neighing of a horse, the lowing of a cow, the barking of a dog, the purring of a cat, sneezing, coughing, groaning, shrieking, and every other involuntary convulsion with oral sound, have almost as good a title to be called

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<sup>1</sup> Energetic brevity is indispensable to an interjection; hence, in all languages oaths assume a curt form, as ‘*morbleu*’ = *par la mort de Dieu*; ‘*zooks*,’ by God’s looks; ‘*zounds*,’ by God’s wounds, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Priscian says, ‘*Interjectionem Græci inter adverbia ponunt*,’ and adds that the Roman grammarians separated the interjection, ‘*quia videtur affectum habere in sese verbi, et plenam motus animi significationem, etiamsi non addatur verbum, demonstrare*,’ xv. 7. Quintilian (*Instt. Or.* i. 4) mentions the rearrangement of the parts of speech by the Romans, who had no article—and he adds, ‘*Sed accedit superiori-bus interjectio*.’

parts of speech as interjections have (!). Voluntary interjections are only employed when the suddenness and vehemence of some affection or passion returns men to their natural state, and makes them for a moment forget the use of speech ; or when from some circumstance the shortness of time will not permit them to exercise it. And in books they are only used for embellishments, and to mark strongly the above situations. But where speech can be employed they are totally useless, and are always insufficient for the purpose of communicating our thoughts. And, indeed, where will you look for the Interjection ? Will you find it amongst laws, or in books of civil institutions ; in history, or in any treatise of useful arts or sciences ? No. You must seek for it in rhetoric and poetry, in novels, plays, and romances.'

Neither the energy of this passage, nor the endorsement of it by Professor Max Müller as 'an excellent answer to the interjectional theory,' move us at all.<sup>1</sup> Whether, indeed, grammarians choose to rank the Interjection as a part of speech or not, is a matter of great indifference, although the fact that they are regularly declinable in Basque<sup>2</sup> shows that their unsyntactical character is merely an accident of language. But at any rate, on the confession of the adversary, they do not deserve all this scorn. We do not assert that a mere interjectional cry has of itself attained to the dignity of language, but that, like the imitation of natural

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<sup>1</sup> I cannot see *any* force in the objection that 'if the constituent elements of speech were mere cries, &c., it would be difficult to understand why brutes should be without language.'—Max Müller, *Lectures*, i. 355. Obviously, as has been observed a thousand times, the *mere power of articulation* is not the *source* of language (*Orig. of Lang.* pp. 79, 164). Half the arguments aimed at the interjectional and onomatopoetic theories altogether miss their mark by not observing that all which those theories profess to explain is the cause which guided man in the choice of *words* to express thought. There would be force in the objection if we held with Hamann that speech is the 'Deipara unserer Vernunft;' or with Shelley, that 'He gave man speech, and *speech created thought*.'

<sup>2</sup> Mentioned doubtfully by Mr. Marsh.—*Lectures*, ed. Smith, p. 197.

sounds, *it was a stepping-stone to true language, both by suggesting the idea of articulate speech and by supplying a large number, if not the entire number of actual roots.* I desire no better illustration of this than the one which Professor Müller has suggested. 'Even,' he says, 'if the scream of a man who has his finger pinched should happen to be identically the same as the French *hélas*, that scream would be an effect, an involuntary effect of outward pressure, whereas an interjection like *alas! hélas!* Italian *lasso*, to say nothing of such words as pain, suffering, agony, &c., is there by the free will of the speaker meant for something, used with a purpose, chosen as a sign.'

Precisely! but is that any reason why we should *despise* the word *hélas*, or ridicule the theory which points out that in the supposed instance *the interjection would have been the source, the root, the origin of the word?* Undoubtedly the cry of pain, *as such*, is not a word, but is a mere physical expression of pain due to the reflex action of the animal soul upon the organs of speech; but this cry, by the law of association, when repeated recalls the feeling itself; it becomes therefore first a symbol, and then a sign of the feeling; it stands for our subjective intuition (*Anschauung*) of the feeling, and thereby at once is elevated from a sound to a word, becoming, in fact, as much a word as any other, because it stands in precisely the same relation to the thing which it signifies. In fact, it stands, if anything, on a higher grade of dignity than any ordinary word, because its significance is more absolute and immediate. Let us, for instance, reject the purely artificial word 'alas!' and take the 'natural interjection ah! ach! and we have at once not merely the *probable*, but the absolutely *certain*<sup>1</sup> *root of a very large class of words in the Aryan languages*, such as *ἄχος*, *achen*, *ache*, *anguish*, *anxious*, *angustus*, and the word *agony* itself. When this fact is a little more widely expanded and illus-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wedgwood, *Etym. Dict.* i. p. xii. See a list of the derivatives from the root in Garnett, *Ess. on Engl. Dialects*, p. 64.

trated, we have the interjectional<sup>1</sup> theory *proved*. Independently of the many and wise students who have accepted it, it is a theory for which most important arguments may be adduced, and therefore it is not one which either *can* be or deserves to be sneered out of notice by a mere nickname, such as that over which so many who are ignorant of the very rudiments of the subject have complacently chuckled.

Professor Müller himself admits that 'with interjections some kind of language *could*<sup>2</sup> have been formed;' and when we have shown at least the extreme probability that a very large portion of existing language *has* had such an origin, surely all *à priori* objections must fall to the ground. If the science of Comparative Philology is to do nothing more than

To chase  
A panting syllable through time and space,  
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark  
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;—

and if in that venerable receptacle for all ethnographic and philological theories we can only catch an archæological curiosity in the shape of some desiccated, never-spoken, lifeless 'root,' we cannot but think that it was hardly worth the trouble of being pursued! An etymology of this kind is no etymology at all. What are we the wiser for being told that a whole class of words comes from a root 'il,' to go, and another class from a root 'ar,' to plough? If this be all, one is somewhat weary of the information when it comes, unless, indeed, which of course often *is* the case, one has been rewarded during the search by the discovery or observation of other linguistic or phonetic laws. Still, if these be regarded as ultimate etymologies, they throw no light what-

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<sup>1</sup> M. Müller, *Lectures*, ii. 88. We see no *great* objection, and absolutely *no* ambiguity, in the words 'onomatopoetic' and 'interjectional;' and we can assure Prof. Müller that, so far as we know, no one has accepted the word 'Imsonic' except the learned suggestor!

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures*, i. 353.

ever on questions which we must regard as soluble, as interesting, and as important, viz. what is the origin of words? Why were sounds chosen as the signs of all things which can become the object of thought? and why were special sounds chosen in particular cases? To all these questions the interjectional and imitative theories are adequate,—up to a certain point,—to furnish us with intelligent and valuable answers; they throw a light on the germs and on the development of language, and they furnish a clear explanation of the origin and history of words in *so many* cases that we may fairly argue the existence of similar principles, even in the cases where the wear and tear of language have broken many important links in the chain of evidence. To refer words to some dry ‘root,’ which confessedly was never used in the intelligent speech of articulately speaking men, and to leave this root without any attempt at further explanation, is to offer us a *caput mortuum* as the prize of our researches, and to abandon unnecessarily, as beyond our reach, many of the deepest problems of language and of human history. If, for instance (to recur to previous examples),<sup>1</sup> a large class of words came from the root ‘ach,’ and another large class from the root ‘dhu,’ and if the former be an interjection, and the latter an onomatopœia, we have got at final facts which *give a new meaning and interest* to the history of the derivatives from these roots; but if we are told that a large family of words come from ‘ar,’ or ‘ga,’ or ‘sal;’ and if about ‘ar,’ and ‘ga,’ and ‘sal,’ nothing more can be said, then what have we learnt? The roots are mere mysterious nonentities, which have taught us nothing and come from nowhere. The earth rests on the back of an elephant, and the elephant stands on a tortoise; but what does the tortoise stand upon?

But in point of fact it has repeatedly occurred to me that Professor Müller really does agree to a very great extent with the theories which he often seems to repudiate: in other

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<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 109.

words, that the argument is in great measure due to mutual misapprehension. For in his new volume he '*wishes to stand entirely neutral*' with regard to the theory that all roots were originally onomatopœias or interjections (p. 92),<sup>1</sup> demanding only that the derivatives should be drawn according to the strictest rules of comparative grammar. If this be so, we entirely agree with him; so far from wishing to arrive at derivations *per saltum* and 'undo all the work that has been done by Bopp, Humboldt, Grimm, and others during the last fifty years,' the majority, at any rate, of those who hold the sneeringly termed Pooh-pooh and Bow-wow theories to be both valuable and true, have always felt the profoundest respect and gratitude to those great men, and the keenest appreciation of the immortal discoveries which have resulted from their labours.

The opponents of these theories constantly try to depreciate them by asserting that Interjections are purely animal, and Onomatopœias either vulgar or childish. Now, as applied to their primitive condition, their first stage, this language is capable of some sort of meaning. Nobody asserted that they *were* language, but only that they are the raw material of it. They are the steps by which man mounts to true language; they are

The ladder

Whereto the climber-upward turns his face !  
But when he once attains the utmost round,  
He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
By which he did ascend.

If, as we are convinced, they helped to suggest the very idea of speech, and supplied man in part with the sounds which his tongue could modulate, and the plastic influence of his intellect could mould, it is surely ungracious to turn round and insult them as '*brutish and inarticulate*.'

And this, in the present instance, is the more unreasonable

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. also ii. 314, where he allows a possibly onomatopœic origin to the root Mar which he traces through so many stages.

and inexcusable, because, as we have seen already, many interjections have passed *unaltered* into the domain of finished language.<sup>1</sup> They have their own province in the kingdom of speech, and if it be not universal, it is at least as noble as any other province. If they appear but seldom—as Horne Tooke scornfully observes—in Law or History or Science, they are yet capable of adding both power and beauty to rhetoric, poetry, and the drama, and are entitled therefore to a splendid position in the domain of literature. Feeling and passion, no less—perhaps we might say far more—than logic and abstract thought, demand their proper exponents in the Speech of Man, and it can hardly be correct to rank no higher than the purring of a cat, or the neighing of a horse, the expressions which give vent and utterance to the most passionate emotions in the instant of their most overwhelming power.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marsh has reminded us that the interjections of Whitfield, ‘his Ah! of pity for the unrepentant sinner, his Oh! of encouragement and persuasion for the almost converted listener, formed one of the great excellences of his oratory;’<sup>3</sup> and as in a former volume I endeavoured to redeem the onomatopoeic element of language from the charge of vulgarity by collecting many remarkable passages to show that onomatopœia often added a singular charm to the loftiest and loveliest passages of the greatest poets, so it would be easy to redeem Interjections from similar injustice by the same process. Take but passages like these:—‘They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!’—or the passionate outbreak, ‘Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, . . .

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<sup>1</sup> A long list of words—and words full of tragic grandeur—might be adduced which come *immediately and professedly* from interjections; such as *οιμώζω*, *αἰδῶ*, *δολούζω*, *ἀλαλάζω*, ululo, ejulo, &c.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Écho des émotions profondes de l’âme, l’interjection traduit l’affection du moment, de la minute, plus fidèlement que toutes les descriptions ne pourraient le faire.’ Chavée, *Les Langues et les Races*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures*, p. 196.



*Ah!* I will ease me of mine adversaries.' And not to add many other Biblical apostrophes, who does not know Wordsworth's touching lines?—

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be,  
But she is in her grave,—and *oh!*  
The difference to me!

Any one acquainted with poetry will remember how many exquisite passages owe, to an interjection, their beauty and their pathos. It was probably a lurking sense of some such truth that led Horne Tooke to say that they were 'beautiful;' what he means by the qualification that they are also 'gaudy,' I can but dimly conjecture.

Sanctius<sup>1</sup> loftily relegates Interjections from the region of speech with a dictum of Aristotle that 'all parts of speech must be originated by convention, not by nature.' Now, Interjections, he says, are *natural*, because they are found among all, resembling in fact the cries of birds and animals. Passing over for the present the arrogant assumption, which runs through such vast portions of human reasoning, that everything pertaining to man must differ in *kind* no less than in *degree* from its analogon among brutes, we may observe that the *naturalness* of interjections—their independence of what Horne Tooke calls 'the artful contrivances of language'—their truthfulness, and simplicity, and freedom from the degraded conditions by which language is made subservient to the concealment of thought—is in fact one of their chief glories. Another of their remarkable properties, 'which not<sup>2</sup> only vindicates their claim to be regarded as constituents of language, but entitles them unequivocally to a high rank among the elements of discourse,' is the inherent and independent expressiveness, by which we may condense into a single ejaculated monosyllable all, and more than

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<sup>1</sup> Sanctius, *Minerva*, i. 2. See Harris, *Hermes*, ii. 5. Horne Tooke, *Div. of Furley*, i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Marsh, *Lectures*, p. 194.

all, of a whole sentence ; condense it too with an impressiveness which no mere sentence can emulate. And again, the interjection is 'subjectively connected with the passion or sensation it denotes, and is not so much the *enunciation or utterance* of the emotion, as *symptom and evidence of it*' —in other words it is subjective not objective, expressive not descriptive, and therefore may be rightfully considered as 'the appropriate language, the mother-tongue of passion.' Regarded from this point of view, it stands on a higher rather than a lower grade than the other constituents of human speech.

If we look to savage nations as displaying to us a picture of the infancy of man, we shall expect to trace some of the earliest and most important facts of speech exemplified in their languages. We have seen already how prominent a part Onomatopœia plays in those languages ; nor is Interjection less predominant. The exclamations used by the excitable Indians, the Kafirs, or the New Zealanders, are beyond all comparison more rich and varied than those used by more advanced nations. It is undoubtedly one of the effects of civilisation to diminish the impressionable excitability of untutored races ; and as excitability finds in interjections its most natural utterance, we naturally expect to find them more numerous among primitive races, and we may reasonably suppose that at the dawn of humanity the interjectional element provided a larger<sup>1</sup> number of roots than it now could do.

The ancients had some remarkable stories which show how fully they felt that utterance is the spontaneous and almost *inevitable* means for the expression of emotion. For instance, Herodotus<sup>2</sup> and other historians tell us how the dumb son of Croesus burst out with an articulate voice for

<sup>1</sup> The very words *Spprechen, sprache* are etymologically connected with *brechen* (cf. *fragor, frangere, ῥήγνυμι*), and like the phrases *ῥήξαι φωνήν*, *rumpere vocem* (Herod. i. 85 ; Virg. *Æn.* ii. 129), imply the interjectional outburst of speech. See Heyse, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Herod. i. 85. Cic. *Div.* i. 53, &c.

the first time when he saw a soldier on the point of assassinating his father. Aulus Gellius relates a story that Ægles, a dumb Samian athlete,<sup>1</sup> seeing that he was being cheated by a deceitful lot in a sacred contest, cried out with a loud voice, and from that time recovered the power of speech. Pausanias has a similar anecdote about Battus of Cyrene, who first got over his impediment of speech in consequence of the horror caused by suddenly catching sight of a lion in the African desert. We are inclined to consider that these stories are not wholly fabulous, and at any rate we have heard a perfectly authentic instance of a lady, who for years had lost her voice, and who recovered it in consequence of the shock caused by a sudden emotion. She had been riding up a hill in Ireland, and being in advance of the rest of the party, came suddenly and unexpectedly on an exceedingly glorious view. Turning round eagerly to signify her delight, she found that the sudden effort had restored loudness and clearness to her voice, and from that time forward experienced no difficulty in speaking, although for a very long period she had only been able to use an inarticulate whisper. *Expression*, then, by a law of nature, is the natural and spontaneous result of *impression*; and however merely animal in their nature the earliest exclamations may have been, they were *probably the very first* to acquire the dignity and significance of reasonable speech, because in their case more naturally than in any other the mere repetition of the sound would, by the association of ideas, involuntarily recall the sensation of which the sound was so energetic and instantaneous an exponent. In the discovery of this simple law, *which a very few instances would reveal to the mind of man*, lay the discovery of the Idea of Speech. The divine secret of language—the secret of the possibility of perfectly expressing the unseen and immaterial by an articulation of air which seemed to have no analogy with it—the secret of accepting sounds as the exponents and signs of everything ‘in the

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<sup>1</sup> Aul. Gell. v. 9. Val. Max. i. 8.

choir of heaven and furniture of earth'—*lay completely revealed in the use of two or three despised interjections!*<sup>1</sup> To borrow a simile from the eloquent pages of Herder, they were the sparks of Promethean fire which kindled language into life.

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<sup>1</sup> The objection 'Why, then, did not animals also discover language?' rises so often from the grave where it was long since buried, and appears to be endowed with such inextinguishable vitality, that we must *again* repeat that it was not the *mere* possession of these vocal cries that enabled man to invent a language, but that, the Innate Idea of language being already in his mind by virtue of his divinely-created organism, the possession of these natural sounds taught him how, and supplied him the materials wherewith, to develop the Idea into perfect speech. We entirely agree with the remark of Wilh. von Humboldt, 'Die Sprache liesse sich nicht erfinden, wenn nicht ihr Typus in dem menschlichen Verstande schon vorhanden wäre.' *Ueber d. Verschied. d. menschl. Sprachbaues*, p. 60. The same thing has been said from the beginning. τὸ δὲ τοῖς οὖσι σημαντικὰς φωνὰς ἐφευρίσκειν καὶ προσηγορίας, τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τῶν τὴν λογικὴν δύναμιν θεῶθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς κεκτημένων, κ.τ.λ. Greg. Nyss. *Contra Eunom.* xii. p. 848.

## CHAPTER IX.

## LAUTGEBERDEN, OR VOCAL GESTURES.

‘Isis et Harpocrates digito qui significat st!’

Vet. Poeta *ap.* Varr. *L. L.* iv. 10.

So far as I am aware, Professor Heyse, in his ‘*System der Sprachwissenschaft*,’ was the first to distinguish accurately between interjections which are the signs of individual emotion beginning and ending with the utterer, and which are, in fact, a concentrated soliloquy, and those which, like visible gestures, convey meaning to some other person, and generally intimate a desire or command. It was certainly Heyse who first<sup>1</sup> called the latter by the expressive and picturesque name of *Lautgeberden* or *Begehrungslaute*, vocal gestures or sounds of desire, like *st!* / *ps!* / *sch!* and to animals *brr!* He called them by this name both because they are often connected with gestures, and because they can be represented by them; as *st!* / by the finger on the lips, &c.<sup>2</sup> Such in English are tush! pish! pshaw! pooh! which are expressive of contempt or aversion, and can only be conceived of as addressed to another: hush! hist!<sup>3</sup> mum! hark! halloo! hip! &c.; and of this nature

<sup>1</sup> See *Syst. der Sprach.* p. 29. ‘*Die Lautgeberden. So nenne ich solche, zum Theil consonantische und dabei nicht syllabische Laute,*’ &c.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the French *zest* ‘interjection, qui ne se prend que dans cette acception proverbiale, “entre le zist et le zest,”’ i.e. ‘middling.’

<sup>3</sup> M. Nodier observes that it would hardly be supposed that etymologists could be found who derived *st!* from ‘*silentium tene.*’ ‘Cela est cependant vrai, car il n’y a point d’idée bizarre dont ce genre d’érudition ne puisse offrir un exemple.’ *Dict.* p. 87.

are many of the exclamations addressed to animals. 'Among them,' says Mr. Marsh,<sup>1</sup> who does not however refer to Heyse, 'are all the isolated, monosyllabic, or longer words by which we invite or repel the approach, and check or encourage the efforts of others; in short, all single detached articulations intended to influence the action or call the attention of others, but not syntactically connected with a period.'

This class of interjections rises, in three respects, above those previously noticed;—first, because they are mainly consonantal, and therefore approach more nearly than the others—in which consonants play a very subordinate part—to the complicated articulations of human speech; secondly, because they have for their object, not merely *expression*, but *communication*; and thirdly, because they do not originate in a mere passive feeling, but are, as has been already noticed, the energetic utterance of desire or will, and are spontaneous rather than involuntary. They hardly attain to the dignity of Language because they express no thought, and are the utterance rather of the feeling life than of the thinking spirit; yet they, in common with the other natural sounds which we have mentioned, correspond to a new step in the development of the human intelligence. The Interjection corresponds to the dawn of sensation; the mere Imitation is an analogon of the word into which it almost immediately passes; the Vocal gesture is an analogon<sup>2</sup> of the sentence, especially of the imperative sentence (compare *st!* with the Latin *sta!*). And thus in the sphere of the natural life, the three chief steps in the development of Intellect and Language are foreshadowed or represented.

To recapitulate a little. Impressions affecting the senses produced a physical effect on the organs of sound, and thereby provoked interjectional *expressions*; the repetition

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<sup>1</sup> Marsh, *Lectures*, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Heyse, p. 73.

of these expressions recalled, by the law of association, the impressions of which they were the utterance, and recalled them not only in the mind of the speaker but also of the hearer. Hence the Interjection served as a sign, and could be recalled by the intellect, no less than the impression by the memory. Here, then, we are at once furnished with all the elements or requirements of speech, namely impressions producing sensations, sensations becoming representations (*Vorstellungen*), and representations expressed by signs. Thought receives its life from Sensation, and Language receives from the interjectional elements its capability of being intuitively understood. Is any other origin of speech conceivable? <sup>1</sup> Speech results from the combined working of the Intellect and the Senses, and no part of speech more directly and immediately illustrates this united activity of the Senses and the Intellect than the Interjection. Is it then strange that Interjections should become as it were the tap-root of all Language? If we extend the meaning of 'Interjection' to embrace the imitations of all spontaneous sounds expressive of physical conditions — not only the natural sounds of wrath, horror, disgust, &c., but those which express the sounds of yawning, sneezing, licking, heavy breathing, shuddering, &c.—then the words *immediately* reducible to this origin may be counted by hundreds; and if to these we add their derivatives, they may perhaps be counted by thousands. And this is equivalent to saying that they *alone* can form a language; for be it remembered that even the Bible itself says all that it has to say by the help of 10,000 words.

And as we shall say no more on the Interjectional origin of Language, we will add what has long been a puzzle to us. While arguing against such an origin, Professor Müller appears to us to accept what is the same thing in other words. If, as is probable, he also seems to have at least modified

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<sup>1</sup> See on the whole subject F. Wüllner, *Ueb. d. Urspr. d. Sprache*, Münster, 1838 (*passim*).

his originally strong hostility to Onomatopœia, we may yet perhaps live to see a change of view as complete, though less marvellous, than that of Herder. I allude to the *only* passage in which I can, from his writings, discover the faintest gleam of light on the question, 'What was the origin of roots?' Now if he confessedly gave up this question as insoluble, there would be no more to say; but this he does not do. He rejects utterly and distinctly the *miraculous* origin of language, yet he says that *phonetic types* 'exist as Plato would say by nature, though with Plato we would add that when we say by nature, *we mean by the hand of God.*' He rejects and nicknames the Interjectional theory of Language; yet on a page (i. 370) which, in spite of the generally matchless clearness of his style, gives me none but the very vaguest and most uncertain conception of his fundamental belief on the matter, *unless it be a complete acceptance of the Interjectional theory*, he says, referring to Heyse, 'There is a law which runs through nearly the whole of nature, *that everything which is struck rings.* . . . It was the same with man, the most highly organised of nature's works.' In the note he says that this fact 'can of course be used as an illustration only, and not as an explanation.' Yet he adds, 'The faculty, peculiar to man in his primitive state, by which every impression from without received its vocal expression from within, must be accepted as a fact.' And in the text he continues, 'Man . . . was endowed not only, *like the brute*, with the power of expressing his sensations by Interjections, and his perceptions by onomatopœia. He possessed likewise the faculty of giving *more articulate expression* to the rational conceptions of his mind.' This was 'an irresistible instinct;' the creative faculty which gave to each conception, as it thrilled for the first time through the brain, a phonetic expression.' Now what explanations have we here? Language was not revealed, yet 'phonetic types' 'exist . . . by the hand of God.' Language did not arise from Interjections or Imitations, yet it came from these *plus* an irresistible instinct whereby man gave 'more



articulate expression to the rational instincts of his mind.'<sup>1</sup> I leave the explanation as I find it. The postulated additional instinct is either a mere development of the Interjectional faculty, or I can only repeat of it, 'Entia non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem. Frustra fit per plura quod fieri possit per pauciora.'

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<sup>1</sup> Long after this passage was written I met with an almost verbally identical criticism of this passage in Steinthal, *Philologie, Geschichte, und Psychologie* (Berlin, 1864), p. 21. He ends, 'd. h. obwohl hier der Ursprung der Sprache erklärt sein sollte, so bleibt er doch eben völlig unerklärt.'

## CHAPTER X.

## VOCAL IMITATIONS.

Ο γὰρ Ἐπίκουρος ἔλεγεν ὅτι οὐχὶ ἐπιστημόνως οὗτοι ἔθεντο τὰ ὀνόματα, ἀλλὰ φυσικῶς κινούμενοι, ὥς οἱ βήσσοντες καὶ παίροντες καὶ μυκώμενοι καὶ ὑλακτοῦντες καὶ στενάζοντες.—PROCLUS, p. 9.

EPICURUS, if he be correctly reported by Proclus, in the often-quoted passage which stands at the head of this section, espouses the views of the Analogists who argued for the *natural* origin of language, against the Anomalists who regarded it as the result of convention. Thus much, at least, is certain :—the *sounds* to which language gave distinct meaning and regular articulation were all of them readily supplied by nature,<sup>1</sup> partly as the involuntary expressions of feeling or desire—under which heads fall the Interjections and Lautgeberden—partly as the instinctive imitations of an external world of sound.

The instinct of imitation has a far deeper foundation than is usually supposed, and plays a most important part in the history of human progress. There is hardly a branch of art, there is hardly a mechanical invention which has not originated in the observation and copying of some process or phenomenon of nature. The instinct, as Herder observes, is common to men and to the higher animals, and is by no means the result of intelligent reflection, but an immediate product of organic sympathy. As one string sounds in

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<sup>1</sup> τὰ ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα φωναί, αἱ δὲ φωναί φύσει, τὰ ἄρα ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα φύσει. Alex. Aphrodis. *Schol. in Arist. de Interpr.* p. 103, in Lersch, p. 89.

unison with another—as a lute laid on a table echoes the tune played upon the lute in the performer's hand—so the human organism is a musical instrument strung into such exquisite harmony with nature, that it vibrates in sympathy with all external influences. The imitative instinct is in fact a kind of intellectual assimilation. We have already seen how powerfully it has worked among all nations in the nomenclature of animals, which were probably the earliest objects to acquire a name. At present, however, we are speaking only of natural sounds, and simple imitations which have not yet reached to the position of *language*, but are the childish instinctive echoes of sensuous perceptions, or the playful reproductions of animal cries and other sounds. The main object of language is communication; but these imitations, in their earliest stage, convey nothing to the hearer, and are merely the result of an inherent tendency to imitate and reproduce, which is found also among birds and animals, and in which a child at a very early stage of his existence finds spontaneous amusement.

It is however important to observe that the imitation is purely subjective;—in other words the imitative sound represents rather the impression produced than the *sound* which produced it.<sup>1</sup> The sounds of nature, for instance, are inarticulate; but by the very nature of the human voice, as used for purposes of speech, the *imitation must* be more or less articulate, and must require consonantal sounds for its production. It is true that caw-caw, bow-wow, βεβεκεκεξ, not not, &c., are not *words*; but nevertheless they are imitative utterances which stand much nearer to words than the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Man vergesse nicht, dass ursprünglich nicht von Nachahmung des Lautes der Aussenwelt die Rede sein kann, so dass gleichsam ein Wetteifern mit der Natur stattgefunden hätte; sondern dass der Mensch *durch den Eindruck des äusseren Lautes eine bestimmte Empfindung erhalte*, und dass sich diese unmittelbar, ohne Reflexion, durch einen Laut äussert,' &c. Wüllner, *Ueber die Verwandschaft des Indogerm.*, &c. § 3. 'The imitative nature of language consists in an artistic imitation not of *things*, but of the *rational impression* which an object produces by its qualities.' Bunsen, *Outlines*, ii. 103.

mere unarticulated emission—which is quite within the range of the human voice—of the sounds which are actually uttered by the rook, the dog, the frog, or the pig. A child can with a little practice imitate with tolerable accuracy the crowing of a cock, and this imitation merely exercises one capacity of his voice ; but if he says ‘cock-a-doodle-doo,’ the imitation is subjective, and merely reproduces in a conventional but very simple manner the *impression* caused by the cock’s noise ; the child has not yet got to a *word* properly understood, but he is on the highroad which leads directly to it. Some inkling of this fact must be lurking in the curious story of Phædrus about the buffoon who received the plaudits of a crowded theatre for his very successful imitation of the squeaking of a pig. As he had begun by bending down his head into the bosom of his robe, the multitude believed that he had a pig concealed there, and redoubled their applause when he shook out his robe and showed them that it was empty. An envious rustic exclaimed that he could excel the exhibitor, and next day both of them appeared on the stage. The buffoon, pretending to have a pig hidden in his robe, repeated his exhibition of the previous day to the delight of the populace ; the rustic, going through the same pantomime, pinched the ear of a real pig which he had brought in with him, and which naturally squeaked its sincerest and best. The people exclaimed that the buffoon’s imitation was much the more natural of the two, and ordered the rustic to be kicked out !

At ille profert ipsum porcellum e sinn,  
Turpemque aperto pignore errorem probans,  
En! hic declarat quales sitis iudices !<sup>1</sup>

‘Nevertheless,’ says Perrault, ‘the people was in the right ; for the comedian who imitated the pig had studied all its most marked and characteristic sounds, and, collecting them together, came closer to the notion which all the world has

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<sup>1</sup> Phædrus, *Fab.* v. 5.

of a pig's grunts.'<sup>1</sup> The story is too curious not to be true, and the explanation too ingenious not to be correct!

The same fact as to the *nature* of linguistic imitations explains the vast diversity in the articulated attempts of various nations to reproduce one and the same sound. This subject has been already illustrated fully,<sup>2</sup> and little more need be added upon it. Who would assert that *kiao kiao* in Chinese, and *dchor dchor* in Mandshu, cock-a-doodle-doo in English, and *Gøkerdihœ* in Franconian, are not onomatopœias for the crowing of a cock, because on paper they look so different? or that '*bang*' is not an onomatopœia for the sound of a gun, because it is wholly unlike the '*pouf*' of the French? or that screech-owl is not as onomatopoetic as *ulula*? or that *taratantara* is not as much an imitation of the trumpet as the Hebrew *Chatzôtzrah* (חֲצוֹצְרָה), or the German *Kling-klang* as the Hebrew (צִלְצַל) *Tziltzâl*, though they have not a letter in common? The Greeks used both *κόγξ* and *βλώψ* (compare our '*flop*') to imitate the sound of the clepsydra, for which sound *Nævius* invents the word '*bilbit amphora*.' Yet a Latin poet says '*glut glut*<sup>3</sup> murmurat unda sonans,' and from this derives the word '*glutton*;' and *Varro*<sup>4</sup> makes '*puls*' (our *pulse*) to be an onomatopœia of similar meaning! A comparison of the sounds of animals, as represented in different languages, will illustrate the fact

<sup>1</sup> *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, iii. 216. Charma, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> See Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, i. 779. *Origin of Lang.* pp. 81-85. The fact, however, that the actual sounds imitated are often *really* different in different countries has often been overlooked. *Ding-dong* represents the tone of a large church-bell, but *bilbil* or *tintinnabulum* of a little hand-bell. So קֶחַץ represents the laughter of an Oriental, *cachinnus* of an Italian, &c. Compare, however, לֵלֵל with γελᾶν *lachen*, Gothic *hlahjan*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Percutit et frangit vas; vinum defluit, ansa

Stricta fuit, *glut glut* murmurat unda sonans,  
Credat glutonem se rusticus inde vocari.'

*Anthol. Lat.* ii. 405. *Burm.*

<sup>4</sup> *Varro, L. L.* iv. 22. For *κόγξ*, *βλώψ*, *κύξ*, &c., see *Eustathius*, p. 768, 12.

most clearly. Coleridge speaks of the nightingale's 'murmurs musical and sweet *jug-jug*,' while Tennyson writes in the person of a peasant-woman,

*Whit, whit, whit*, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale,

and the Turkish poet, still trying to reproduce the same sound, calls the bird a *bulbul*. How then is this remarkable diversity to be explained? <sup>1</sup> The reason of it is, that man does not attempt to make the *identical* sound which he hears, but *artistically* <sup>2</sup> to reproduce it or the impression it has made, just as a painter often purposely deviates from the actual colours of nature because they would not produce the same effect on the mind under the limited conditions of his art. In fact the *mind* no less than the sense contributes its share to the imitative result. It is not a dull passive echo, but an ideal reflection. The mind, like the magic glass of Cydippe, *modifies* every image which it reflects. It is, as has been proved repeatedly, an absurdity to say that there is any resemblance between the impression and the phenomenon or object which produces it. The former is of course a coefficient of the latter, but as the relations between them are utterly unknown, any comparison of the two involves an inherent absurdity.

Imagination then plays no small part even in the production of these imitative sounds, and it is probable that among primeval races imagination, as exercised in the appellative faculty, was far more delicate and active than it now is; indeed, we may at once infer that such was the case by noticing its workings among savage tribes. Language, be it remembered, was not fashioned at the writing-desk or in the close study of the philosopher. 'If we would follow its

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<sup>1</sup> In the fanciful and often absurd *Ornithophonia* of Boerius one may see how manifold are the ways of representing our impression of a bird's note. Parts of it are quoted in Nodier's *Dict. des Onomatop.* p. 283; and he also gives at length Bechstein's amazing analysis of the song of the nightingale.

<sup>2</sup> See Benloew, *Recherches sur l'Origine des Noms de Nombre*, p. 91.

track,' it has been said, 'we must place ourselves under the broad free heaven, in the fresh life-exuberant Youth of Mankind, in the age of overweening strength, fermenting vigour, overflowing plenty. . . . The whole deeply-felt necessity which urged the primitive men from one step of language to another must come out before us in most living reality, and penetrate our whole being with its inward and primitive force. So possibly may we succeed in finding once more the long-obscured traces of past millenniums.'<sup>1</sup>

The manifold forms which words may assume, which are yet all directly inspired by the imitative principle, are perhaps best shown in the names for thunder—although the word thunder itself, and its cognates, tonitru, donner, tonnerre, &c., are believed to have had a different origin,<sup>2</sup> and merely to have been subsequently moulded into onomatopoeic semblance by an unconscious feeling of congruity. Two treatises have been written on the subject—one by Grimm (*Ueber Namen des Donners*, Berlin, 1855), and another by Pott (*Ueber Mannigfaltigkeit des sprachlichen Ausdrucks*).<sup>3</sup> From the latter of these (which the author did me the honour to send me with a most kind letter) I select a few only of the names for thunder. Such are Sanskrit *gargī*, distant thunder; *vaḡraḡvala*, a clap of thunder; Gaelic *tàirneanach*; Bohemian *hřmêng*, *hromobitj*; Albanian *βου-βουλit*; Wallachian *trësuetu*; Icelandic *thruma*. Who does not see the imitative instinct here at work? Yet the results are as different as are the individual impressions, which even differ in the same person with the mood in which they find him at any particular time. Nay, more, our impressions

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<sup>1</sup> Drechsler, *Grundlegung zur wissenschaftlichen Konstruktion des gesammten Wörter- und Formschatzes zunächst der semitischen, versuchsweise und in Grundzügen auch der indogerm. Sprachen*, p. xxi. Can no one influence the German writers to remember that life is too short for such intolerably long-winded titles to their books?

<sup>2</sup> I have examined, further on, the connection of *τελειν* and tonitru. Pott, *ubi infra*, p. 208. Heyse, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Printed in the *Journal of Steinthal and Lazarus*.

are often purely conventional in their origin. Ancient writers, for instance, and nearly all writers down to the time of Milton, make the song of the nightingale 'most melancholy,' and fancied they caught in it the echo of a bereaved mother's wail. But in modern days we have long been agreed that it is

The *merry* nightingale  
That crowds and hurries and precipitates  
With fast thick warble its delicious notes.

What the eye sees and the ear hears depends in no small measure on the brain and the heart. The hieroglyphics of nature, like the inscriptions on the swords of Vathek, vary with every eye that glances on them; her voices, like the voice<sup>1</sup> of Helen to the ambushed Greeks, take not one tone of their own, but the tone that each hearer loves best to hear.

So far then we have examined (1) the development of 'representations,' as the objects of distinct thought; and (2) the natural sounds out of which can alone be framed the language which expresses thought. It still remains to catch a glimpse, so far as is possible, of the further process of development which weds the sounds of language to its sense. But even so far as we have yet proceeded we may see that Speech was not produced either by purely arbitrary or by distinctly conscious processes. The human organism evolved it as an integral part of its own life, by an unconscious necessity which resulted from its inmost constitution.<sup>2</sup> There was no need to *search* for the sounds which should correspond with and paint the sensations they expressed; Instinct supplied them, in the form of Interjections and Imitations, far more powerfully and swiftly than could have been done by the wavering process of conscious selection. 'As the artist fashions the symbol in which his Idea is reborn,

<sup>1</sup> Vid. *Od.* iv. 278. ἐκ δ' ὀνομακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους  
πάντων Ἀργείων φωνήν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν.

<sup>2</sup> Drechsler, *ubi supra*, p. 10.



not by conscious consideration, but, like nature, by unconscious science ;—as the heart stirred by joy or sorrow, still, without search or hesitation, immediately, unconsciously, but surely and appropriately, utters the sound which truly paints the colour of the passion—so it is in all language.’ To develop Language was the appointed task for the youth of humanity, and its work, as is ever the case with the work of the inspired artist, is inconceivable to the uninitiated, and wonderful to all.

It is a curious and interesting fact that even among uncivilised nations we find what appears to be a trace, mythologically expressed, of this same conception, viz. that it was the mighty diapason of nature which furnished man with the tones which he modulated into articulate speech. The Esthonian<sup>1</sup> legend of the kettle of boiling water which ‘the Aged one’ placed on the fire, and from the hissing and boiling of which the various nations learnt their languages and dialects, mythically represents the Kesselberg, with its crests enveloped in the clouds of summer steam, which they regarded as the throne of the thunder-god; and the Languages which it distributes are the rolling echoes of Thunder and Lightning, Storm and Rain. They have another and still more beautiful legend of a similar character to explain the origin of Song or Festal-speech. The god of song Wanne-munne descended on the Domberg, on which stands a sacred wood, and there played and sang. All creatures were invited to listen, and they each learnt some fragment of the celestial sound; the listening wood learnt its rustling, the stream its roar; the wind caught and learnt to re-echo the shrillest tones, and the birds the prelude of the song. The fish stuck up their heads as far as the eyes out of the water, but left their ears under water; they saw the movements of the god’s mouth, and imitated them, but remained dumb. Man only grasped it all, and therefore his song pierces into

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<sup>1</sup> Grimm, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 28. The explanations are given by Steinthal, *Gesch. d. Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*, p. 10.

the depths of the heart, and upwards to the dwellings of the gods.

The legends of savages, and their mythical attempts to express a dim philosophy of speech, are so *extremely* few that it is interesting to observe in them this tendency. The following legend of the Australian aborigines appears at first sight to be meaningless. They say that there was an old woman named Wururi, who went out at night and used to quench the fires with a great stick. When this old woman died the people tore her corpse to pieces. The Southern tribes coming up first ate her flesh, and immediately gained a very clear language. The Eastern and the Northern tribes, who came later, spoke less intelligible dialects. If Steinthal<sup>1</sup> be right in seeing in Wururi a personification of the damp Night-wind, then at the root of this legend also, lies the notion that the Imitation of Nature helped largely to furnish the material of speech.

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<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. der Sprachwissenschaft*, p. 9.

## CHAPTER XI.

## FROM IMITATIVE SOUNDS TO INTELLIGENT SPEECH.

Μεγάλη τούτων ἀρχὴ καὶ διδάσκαλος ἡ φύσις, ἡ ποιοῦσα μιμητικούς ἡμᾶς  
καὶ θετικούς τῶν ὀνομάτων, οἷς δηλοῦται τὰ πράγματα.

DION. HAL. *De Comp. Verb.* p. 94.

THE Intelligence plays but a very subordinate part, and finds no adequate expression,<sup>1</sup> in the Natural Sounds which tell of sensation and sensuous impression.

Reasonable speech begins when the mind has arrived at those immediate individual perceptions which we have called Intuitions,<sup>2</sup> and which correspond to the German *Anschaungen*. These intuitions are expressed, in the parallel development of sound, by Roots.

The Representation is a development of the Intuition, by means of Abstraction; and in the same way the Word is a development of the Root by a formal limitation of the merely material meaning of the root into a determinate object of thought, which also externally assumes a determinate and limited Sound.

Just as the intuition (*Anschaung*) melts into the representation (*Vorstellung*) without acquiring any permanent

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this brief section I generally follow Heyse, p. 88 sqq.,—except where otherwise indicated; I do not however translate him, frequently preferring other forms of expression or arrangement of sentences, and frequently interweaving my own comments or illustrations.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Every act of consciousness of which the immediate object is an individual thing, state, or act of mind, presented under the condition of distinct existence in space or time.’ Mansel, *Proleg. Log.* p. 9, in Fleming, p. 272.

fixity, so in actual speech the Root vanishes into the Word. It has no independent existence; but can only be separated into its elements by an analysis of Language in its finished state.

The production of the word is necessarily coincident with the production of the 'representation.' For in consequence of man's double nature, partly corporeal, partly spiritual, he cannot firmly grasp a 'representation' otherwise than by means of the word which is its sensuous sign. The creative Spontaneity of the Intellect in the production of the 'representation' must express itself in a corresponding spontaneous effort of the physical organism. The representation must receive an objective form. In order to grasp and retain the representation in his own intellectual possession, man must necessarily likewise clothe it in a palpable form, for himself, and—since his life is essentially social—for others also. In order to master an object and appropriate it to himself for his own mental purposes, he must give it an Ideal existence instead of its real one, and even this Ideal existence must have its sensuous form in order that it may be exhibited and expressed. He cannot be thoroughly conscious of the representation, as of something which he definitely possesses, without giving it *some* form of expression,<sup>1</sup> and the most perfect and natural form, as has been shown already, is furnished by Sound.

We have arrived then at that point in the Rise of Language at which man must develop those Natural Sounds, which he possesses as a part of the animal creation, into meaning and appropriate words, so specialised as to become the signs of distinct conceptions. What we have yet to try and understand is the reason why *particular* sounds should have been attached to particular conceptions; or, in other words, we must try and discover whether there are any principles on which we can establish a natural, organic

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<sup>1</sup> Similar reasoning may be found in Humboldt, *Ueber d. Verschied. d. menschl. Sprachbaues*, p. 68. See p. 51 of the Analysis of this work by M. Tonnellé.

connection between words, regarded as sounds, and the meanings which we attach to them.

Now unless we take refuge in miracle or mysticism—unless we shield ourselves behind a plea of lazy ignorance, which simply means a refusal to enquire, or hide that very ignorance under the exploded jargon of a pseudo-metaphysical science by talking of occult causes—we must admit that there *must have been an original connection between sound and sense*. 'The word,' as Steinthal observes, 'belongs not only to the speaker but to the hearer,' and 'comprehension<sup>1</sup> and speech are only different effects of the same power of Language.' Now a root, or a word, could be practically neither root nor word if it were unintelligible to the hearer; it would be as meaningless as the babble of an idiot. How then could such a sound be intelligible? It is too late in the day to talk of the possibility of *Convention* being the origin of the meaning attached to sounds. Against *such* a theory alone applies with full force the celebrated dictum of Humboldt that 'man is man only by means of language, but that without language he never could have invented language.' Now as the connection between sound and sense was not arbitrary, and was not miraculous, it must have had a definite reason. Any sound therefore which would at once express and convey even the simplest sensation, must necessarily be a spontaneous *natural* sound; i.e. it must be either imitative or interjectional. The living, feeling, observing Child of Nature, without deliberation, influenced only by sensation or the imitative instinct, produces a sound to represent his conceptions; and this sound, so originated, is instantly intelligible, by virtue of its natural force, to a fellow-man, similarly organised, standing on the same step of mental development, and surrounded by precisely the same conditions, circumstances, and climatic influences. The nearer men stand to the natural life, the

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<sup>1</sup> Steinthal, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 11. Humboldt, *Ueber d. Verschied.* p. 70. Heyse, p. 13. Becker, *Organ. d. Sprache*, § 3.

more they resemble one another.<sup>1</sup> Individuality is evolved by dawning civilisation. The whole life of the savage in all its external indications, is the life rather of a species than of an individual, and consequently it is dominated over by certain natural necessities rather than by the freedom of the Intellect. Hence among uncultivated races, far more than among civilised races, the *sound* uttered by each individual would with extraordinary rapidity be accepted and understood as a *sign* by the entire nation. Thus there would be in the Origin of Language nothing either capricious or mystical, but the harmonious and perfect working of laws and instincts inseparable from the very nature of mankind; and it may confidently be asserted that if the explanation thus offered as to the original union between sound and sense be not correct, it is at any rate an explanation that naturally suggests itself—it is one which has been accepted by many profound and eminent philologists—it is one which may be supported by many powerful and valuable arguments, and *no other worth considering has ever been offered in its place.*

We say '*no other*;' for the theory of 'phonetic types' stops short of this question altogether. There must have been a *reason* why a 'phonetic type' *was* a type—and this is the reason which, as being deeply interesting as well as most important, we try to discover. For if the 'phonetic type' was 'an accidental label stuck on to a thing' there is an end to *the Science* of Language, and words are but the accidents of accidents. Is not such a view of words an instance of the very fault which the author of it reprobates—the fault of preferring the unintelligible which can be admired to the intelligible which can only be understood?

We must now consider yet more closely the growth of natural sounds, and especially Imitations, into Language—which together with a defence and explanation of the results arrived at will occupy the two next sections.

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<sup>1</sup> It has been said that the members of savage tribes are, even in countenance, so exactly like each other that no passport system would be possible among them.

## CHAPTER XII.

## ONOMATOPŒIA.

Ὀνοματοποιεῖται δὲ ἐστὶ φωνῆς μίμησις πρὸς τὴν ποιοτητα τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ἤχου.—SUID. s. v. σίζω.

IF we consider on the one hand the different kinds of natural sound, and on the other the stock of words which belong to intelligent speech, we shall find many close points of contact and transition between the two.<sup>1</sup> We find, in fact, in Imitations and Interjections two concurrent points of origin for the two main classes of words. All the words of language may be classed under two great divisions, which may be called Matter-words and Form-words. To the former class belong Nouns<sup>2</sup> and Verbs, which supply the main materials of Thought and Speech, and signify perceptible objects or distinct actions; to the latter belong pronouns, particles, &c., which express our perceptions as modified by numerous relations of Space and Time. Now as a general, though far from invariable rule, all matter-words of whose origin we can give any account at all spring from imitative sounds; and form-words from interjections, especially from what have been called Vocal Gestures. In the primitive language indeed, parts<sup>3</sup> of speech had no

<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> A somewhat similar division is found in Aristotle's *φωνὰς σημαντικαὶ* (*ὄνομα, ῥῆμα*) and *φωνὰς ἀσημοὶ* (*σύνδεσμος, ἀρθρον*).

<sup>3</sup> 'Die Sprache ist nicht stückweis oder atomistisch, sie ist gleich in allen ihren Theilen als Ganzes und demnach organisch entstanden.' Schelling, *Einl. in die Philos. d. Mythologie*, p. 51. On the primitive speech-cells, which have as yet no special organs for the functions of distinct parts of speech, see Schleicher, *Die Darwinische Theorie und*

recognised existence; the very genius of language was holophrastic, and a sound stood for a sentence,<sup>1</sup> the same sound having many meanings according to its position or pronunciation. Nevertheless there must have been from the first a traceable distinction between nominal and pronominal roots. 'A rigorous analysis of the Indo-European tongues,' says Mr. Garnett, 'shows, if we mistake not, that they are reducible to two very simple elements: 1. Abstract nouns,<sup>2</sup> denoting the simple properties or attributes of things. 2. Pronouns, originally denoting the relations of Space.' We shall hope to show reasons for believing that nouns had, for the most part, their direct origin in imitative sounds; and considering that in the origin of language the distinction between parts of speech is only of the slightest and most rudimentary character,<sup>3</sup>—if we can trace the genesis of nouns, we have solved the problem before us.

An imitative sound gives expression to an auditory perception, and therefore has a necessary and obvious relation to the object which causes the perception. The *sound*, per-

*die Sprachwissenschaft*, p. 23. This is an ingenious pamphlet showing the light which the Darwinian hypothesis throws upon language.

<sup>1</sup> 'Les inventeurs des langues n'étaient pas des grammairiens comme Condillac, Adam Smith, et tant d'autres, qu'on croirait avoir dîné avec nos premiers parents, tant ils sont bien instruits de la manière exacte et précise dont le premier langage a été formé.' Du Ponceau, *Mém. sur le Syst. Gram. des Langues de l'Amérique du Nord*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to speak of the *priority* of nouns or verbs; both originate together, as specialisations of the original vague elements of speech. See Schleicher, *Compend. d. vergl. Gram.* p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> Every lingua franca presents a picture of what the primitive languages must have been, by reducing language to its simplest elements, and by the almost complete elimination of grammar. See Appleyard, *Kaf. Gram.* p. 10. Latham, *Var. of Man*, p. 320 sqq. Here, for instance, is a negro crier's version of the notice that 'Pigs without rings in their noses are to be shot.' 'I say—suppose a pig walk—iron no live for him nose!—gun shoot! kill *im* one time.'—Hutchinson, *Ten Years' Wanderings*, p. 32. And here is a specimen of the Chinese 'pigeon' (i.e. 'business') English. 'My chin-chin you, this one velly good flin (= friend) belong mi; mi wantchie you do plopel pigeon (= proper business) along he, all same fashion along mi,' &c.—*Prehistoric Man*, ii. 428.



ceived and reproduced, gives to the Intellect a fixed mark of the *object* perceived. How then could man more naturally name the representation of an object which he has grasped in his intelligence, than by the copy of its characteristic mark? Now when the Imitative natural sound is firmly held as a sign of, and then as a name for the representation, it becomes a Word ; and this method of forming words is named Onomatopœia.

First of all man names the *perceived sound itself* by the natural imitation of it, e.g. a croak, a shriek, βόη, &c. ; next the producing of the sound, as croaking, shrieking, βόων, &c. ; and finally the object from which the sound emanates, and which the repetition of it recalls before the mind, as crow, βοῦς, cuckoo, &c.

Now those who attack the Onomatopœic theory invariably leap to the conclusion that we mean by it to describe Language as due *solely* to the Instinct of Imitation, and that as other animals have this instinct and yet do not possess language the theory breaks down. Possibly indeed such a notion may arise from want of sufficient precision in our statements of the theory ; but as we have repeatedly protested against it before, so we here again caution the student that this is not our view, and that to argue as if it were is not to refute but to misrepresent. A *mere* capacity for sensuous imitation would end, as it does with the jay and the mocking-bird, in a mere collection of natural sounds. But here the intellect steps in, and makes the imitation a means for the satisfaction of its higher needs. In itself the mere imitation is a natural sound expressive of a sensuous impression, and nothing more ; but the mind seizes upon it as a means for its own culture, reproduces it at will as the *sign* of a fixed representation, as the name of that representation, and so as a WORD. And when the Sound has become a Word, it has a far richer and at the same time more abstract meaning, inasmuch as it no longer signifies or even calls attention to the imitated Sound, but stands for the whole conception. Nobody for instance in using the word

cow<sup>1</sup> dreams of its *primeval* significance as the creature that *lows* (in North Country dialect 'coo'), but as a most useful domestic animal, possessing numberless familiar attributes.

Now, as far as the mere outward form is concerned, there may be only a single step from the natural Sound to the Word; nay more, the two may be *phonetically coincident*; but between the inner meaning of the two lies the entire chasm which separates the natural life of sense from the free intellectual life—the entire chasm which separates the sensation from the concept.

It is true that in finished language the pure and obvious onomatopœias are *mainly* those which express the actual sounds imitated, or verbal forms derived from them; to roar,<sup>2</sup> buzz, whizz, crack, clang, screech, hiss, rustle, &c.; and more rarely substantives, such as crow, cuckoo, peewit, &c., because when the Intellect pierces deeper into the nature of things, it often rejects the crude imitation which is no longer *a necessity*, and proceeds to the naming of objects by deeper-lying and more significant characteristics

<sup>1</sup> Is it conceivable that any one can, with this explanation before him, prefer to derive it from the Sanskrit root *gu*, *to go*? Would any human being have fixed on *going* as a special attribute, a characteristic mark, of the cow!—so characteristic as to be selected out of a host of attributes to suggest the animal's name! See Pictet, *Les Orig. Ind.* i. 331, who very sensibly admits the onomatopoetic origin. See, too, T. Hewitt Key's able pamphlet, *Quæritur*, p. 8. I take this opportunity of apologising to Professor Key for my inadvertence in attributing to him the derivation of 'vivo' from 'bibo,' which he never in any way sanctioned (*Orig. of Lang.* p. 105). I have already explained to him by letter the origin of my mistake.

<sup>2</sup> It would be easy to produce a very long and striking list of such verbs in Hebrew. Greek is also rich in them, as *δολύζειν*, *ἀλαλάζειν*, *μηκάσθαι*, *μυκάσθαι*, *βρυχάσθαι*, *βόλζειν*, *χρεμετίζειν*, *συρίζειν*, *σίζειν*, *κλαγγαίνειν*, κ.τ.λ. Latin *ululare*, *balare*, *mugire*, *rugire*, *stridere*, *hinnire*, *sibilare*, &c. See Egger, *Notions Élémentaires de Gram. Comp.* p. 155. The little poem *Philomela*, by Albius Ovidius Juventinus, is a string of such onomatopœias, mostly of his own invention. It deserves a passing glance, though its value is purely philological. Many of these imitations with others may be seen in the fragment of an old glossary, 'Ex regula l'hocæ.' Mai, *Auct. Class.* vi. 600.

—which are often expressed by words in which all traces of original imitation have disappeared for centuries.

So far Heyse; with much that he proceeds to add, we disagree, and we shall incidentally give reasons for doing so in the following part of the chapter. On one point however we are *entirely* of his view, in regarding the onomatopoeitic principle as *a starting-point of Language*; we do not however think with him that the advancing intellect of mankind *soon* dispensed with it, and still less that it had but a trifling influence in liberating the intellect from mere sensuous impressions. The fact that it is still seen so conspicuously at work in the language of children and savages seems to us to refute such conclusions. I venture to disagree from Heyse only in the small degree of importance which he attaches to the principle. Granting that he is correct in considering the Sound to be a mere means, or element, or 'moment' in the development of the Word, just as the perception is in the development of the concept—granting that the Word never, or very rarely, continues to be a *mere* Echo or Reflex of the sensuous impression—still without this means, without these mere echoes, it seems to us certain that language could never have existed. They were the appointed instrument to develop the latent germ, or Idea, of Speech, and we believe that they suggested the vast majority of actual roots.

Perhaps a consideration of the objections to the theory will enable us to understand it more clearly. They will at any rate leave the reader more in a position to judge for himself, and will show our desire to avoid mere *ex parte* statements and reasonings. I have searched for these objections and refutations far and wide, and not consciously shirked any one of them; and in order to give them the best possible position, I shall quote them, as often as I can, from the pages of Professor Max Müller. It will, I think, be seen that the only ones which are at all insuperable are aimed not at the theory rightly understood, but at mere misapprehension of it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

OBJECTIONS TO THE IMITATIVE THEORY—ASSERTED PAUCITY  
OF ONOMATOPŒIAS, EVEN IN ANIMAL NAMES.

‘Gallorum cantus, et ovantes gutture corvos,  
Et vocum quidquid bellua et ales habet,  
Omnia cum similes ita vere ut ficta negentur,  
Non potes humanæ vocis habere sonum.’

Auson. *Epig.* lxxvi.

1. THE first objection to the theory that the imitation of natural sounds was the chief starting-point of language, and the source of most nominal roots, is that ‘*the certain onomatopœias in our language are few in number.*’

‘Though there are names in every language formed by mere imitation of sound, yet these constitute<sup>1</sup> *a very small proportion of our dictionary.* They are the playthings, not the tools of language, and any attempt to reduce the most common and necessary words to imitative roots ends in complete failure.’

So wrote Professor Müller in his first series of Lectures (i. p. 347); but it is fair to hope that his view has been a little modified, because in his second series he writes (ii. 92), ‘There is one class of scholars who derive all words from roots according to the strictest rules of comparative grammar, but who look upon the roots in their original character as

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<sup>1</sup> A similar objection is urged by Egger: ‘Si l’on compare à l’immense richesse des langues grecque, latine et française, le petit nombre des mots dont il peut rendre compte, on se convaincra que l’étymologie ne doit pas accorder à l’onomatopée une trop grande importance.’ *Notions Élémentaires*, p. 155.

either interjectional or onomatopœic.' With regard to this theory, which is the only one which I am maintaining, he says, '*I should wish to remain entirely neutral*, satisfied with considering roots as phonetic types till some progress has been made in tracing the principal roots not of Sanskrit only, but of Chinese, Bask, the Turanian, and Semitic languages, back to the cries of man or the imitated sounds of nature.'

Our reply to the objection is this: That if the proposed etymologies be correct, 'the words formed by mere imitation of sound' do *not* constitute by any means 'a very small proportion of our dictionary.' Perhaps the meaning is however that the *obvious, certain, and indisputable* onomatopœias are few in number. Indeed we conceive that this must be the meaning, because elsewhere it is admitted 'that each language possesses a *large stock* of words imitating the sounds given out by certain things.'<sup>1</sup> The word 'few' then is a very relative word, and if any one will examine for himself with patience a fair portion of a Greek, Hebrew, or English Lexicon, he will find that even the *certain* onomatopœias, with their derivatives, furnish him with a very long list; and that the number of words which have so much of the onomatopœic element in them as most plausibly to be referred to a similar origin (especially as any other account which can be given of them is *at least* equally questionable), is *very large indeed*. In French and in English the student will find the task ready performed to his hands by Charles Nodier in his *Dictionnaire des Onomatopées*, and by Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood in his *Dictionary of English Etymology*. The former is full of errors which were perhaps inevitable at the time when it was written; and every student will find a good deal from which he must withhold his consent until further proofs are adduced. But even with this deduction a candid consideration of M. Nodier's and Mr. Wedgwood's labours can hardly fail to convince him that the objection as to the paucity of actual onomatopœias is one

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<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, ii. 89.

which is wholly without weight. Only, in looking for onomatopœias he must remember that there is an immense gap between articulate and inorganic sounds,<sup>1</sup> and that he is looking, not for *imitations*, like bow-wow, but for human *words* adopted into rational speech, and therefore framed by the Intelligence of man from mere raw echoes to artistic articulated sounds in accordance with the processes which we have already endeavoured to trace. He must remember too that in the course of ages, Words (to borrow the frequent similitude) are tossed and rolled and chipped<sup>2</sup> out of shape like the pebbles which are perpetually tumbled by the sea-waves upon a shingly beach, and that therefore a word, once distinctly imitative, has often lost every possible external trace of its sensuous origin. It is now an established fact that every abstract word has acquired its meaning by derivation and metaphor from other words expressive of mere sensation,<sup>3</sup> yet how long and difficult, in some cases how uncertain or even impossible, it is to point out the intervening stages; and to the flippant and the ignorant how ridiculous is the apparent inadequacy of the origin to produce

<sup>1</sup> And, for this reason, 'in the imitative synonyms of the same or cognate tongues, we must expect only to meet with *resemblances of a very general nature*.' Mr. Wedgwood, in *Phil. Trans.* ii. 118. It is most necessary to enforce this observation. Onomatopœia is not so much the imitation of sounds, as the instinctive and quasi-imitative reproduction of *the impressions made by sounds*. Wüllner, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, s. 28. We must not therefore expect to find them either uniform or exact. They may range over wide phonetic differences, and yet be onomatopoetic in origin.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in ideographical characters which were once pictorial, 'that the resemblance should be in many cases so exact as in itself to demonstrate the object, is scarcely to be expected.' Marshman, *Chinese Gram.* p. 17. And Ewald (*Hebr. Gram.* § 135) says of the Hebrew alphabet, 'The signs have been for the most part very much altered, because in writing they retained the dead traces only from habit, without thinking of their meaning according to the intention of the first discoverers.' This is, *verbatim*, true of language also.

<sup>3</sup> 'So hat auch keine Sprache ein Abstractum, zu dem sie nicht durch Ton und Gefühl gelangt wäre.' Herder, *Abhandl.* s. 122.

the result ! Yet the fact has now been demonstrated, and we only ask the same patience and unprejudiced learning in the endeavour to trace the physical origin of all our words from natural sounds. And as we are confirmed in our conviction of the sensational origin of all our abstract words by observing that the more primeval and uncultivated a language is, the more numerous are its sense-words, and the fewer its abstractions, so we are confirmed in our conviction about onomatopœia by observing its extreme prevalence and vividness in the tongues which have least been subjected to the influences of civilisation. ‘That portion of the vast growth of language,’ says an ingenious writer <sup>1</sup> ‘which can be traced to a directly mimetic root may remain a small fraction of the whole ; but *if it be the only portion whose structure is intelligible to us*, we shall readily believe that the working of this principle is limited by our ignorance and not by its own nature. The progress of all science consists in the destruction of these phantasmal limitations which, like the circle of the visible horizon, we project upon the outward world. . . . The study of language, we doubt not, is destined to achieve an analogous triumph over the weakness of our imagination, teaching us, in the imperfect accents of the child or the savage, to recognise the working of that principle which has perfected for us the instrument of thought.’

Let us take a parallel case. It is now admitted by all competent scholars that all alphabetic writing derived its origin from pictorial and ideographic signs which originated from systems invented in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, and elsewhere. The analysis of the whole body of speech into its elementary sounds, and the representation of these sounds to the eye by figures on a plane surface, is so marvellous a discovery—hardly less marvellous than the discovery of speech itself—that, like speech and no less erroneously, it has been attributed to direct inspiration, and ascribed by Jews and

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<sup>1</sup> In *Macmillan's Magazine*.

Christians to Moses, Abraham, Seth, or Noah,<sup>1</sup> as by the ancient Egyptians to the god Thoth. Yet it is now established that writing was a gradual human discovery, and that the secret of it, like that of speech, was suggested by the instinct of imitation. Now this has been proved by precisely similar steps of induction to those<sup>2</sup> which we have followed in referring all roots to an onomatopoetic origin; and if the steps of the argument have been in the one case universally accepted as conclusive and satisfactory, why should they not be similarly accepted in the other? Just as we have proved that imitative words are most common in savage languages; that they are more numerous and distinct in primitive than in modern languages; that many of them are confessedly and clearly traceable; that they supply us with a *vera causa* or adequate explanation; that the steps of the progress are thus simple and natural; and that no other theory has been seriously attempted—so we show that picture-writing *has* prevailed and *does* prevail among various uncultivated races; that it is the most obvious principle which could have been adopted; that it explained itself; that in all traceable instances the picture was the origin of the letter; and that for instance in Egyptian<sup>3</sup> writing the Demotic or enchorial system is a corruption of the Hieratic, which is a degeneration of the Hieroglyphic, which is but a modification of the pictorial. With these clues we take any alphabet; and as the Aramæan is the most important, and may most probably, as tradition

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<sup>1</sup> Voss, *De Arte Grammatica*, pp. 39–43. He truly says that on this topic ‘multi multa tradiderunt et fuse, et confuse.’

<sup>2</sup> In fact the processes are *strictly analogous*. The alphabet originally presented pictures, i.e. copies or imitations, to the eye, and when the secret of such representation was once learnt, the pictures rapidly became conventional and unrecognisable: so language presented copies or imitations to the ear, which imitations were rapidly modified out of mere echoes into definite words by the action of well-defined physical and psychical laws.

<sup>3</sup> See for details the admirable article on Hieroglyphics by Mr. R. S. Poole, in the 8th ed. of the *Encycl. Britannica*.



asserts, have been the origin of the Phœnician, and through that of the Greek, and through that of the Roman alphabet and of our own—and as the Hebrew alphabet is one of our oldest approximations to the Aramæan,<sup>1</sup> let us take that alphabet and see how it was arrived at. We find then at once *that the name of each letter is the name of some object, and the form of the letter a rude representation of the form of the object.* Thus :—

Ⲁ Aleph = an ox ; originally Ⲳ an ox's head.<sup>2</sup>

Ⲃ Beth = a house ; sometimes Ⲋ a tent (nearly as in Chinese).

Ⲅ Gimel = a camel ; the form representing its neck or hump.

Ⲇ Daleth = a door ; Greek Δ a tent-door.

Ⲉ Vau = a tent-peg, or hook.

And so on in nearly every case ; so that in the doubtful instances, such as Ⲉ He, and Ⲍ Samech,<sup>3</sup> we are entitled at once to conclude a similar parentage, though not with certainty discoverable. If we take other letters from the Greek alphabet, which were not among the original φοινίκη γράμματα of Cadmus, some curious origins are suggested to us. Thus Simonides, the legendary inventor of the letters ξ, ψ, and ω, is said to have invented the figure of the first because it resembles a saw of which its sound is an imitation, and the second because 'ψ' recalls the whistling of an arrow, which the letter roughly represents. Of Υ and Φ,

<sup>1</sup> According to Ewald it was not invented by the Phœnicians (Luc. *Phars.* iii. 220), but by the Aramæans (Plin. *Nat. Hist.* vii. 56). The name of each letter begins with the letter for which it stands.

<sup>2</sup> See Ewald's *Hebr. Gram.* § 135-140.

<sup>3</sup> The word *samech* possibly means 'a prop ;' but may not its *form*, no less than that of the letter Ⲍ, the Greek σ s, and the English S, represent the chief sibilant animal, the serpent? If we remember the curious fact that the Hebrew letters are arranged according to the meanings, and not on any scientific principle [e.g. Ⲁ and Ⲃ (weapon and scrip), Ⲁ and Ⲃ (hand and hollow of hand), Ⲉ and Ⲇ (eye and mouth) come together], then samech, if it ever stood for 'serpent,' comes appropriately after Ⲅ (a fish). Cf. Amos, ix. 3.

both of which are mythically attributed to Palamedes, tradition tells us that one represents the flight of cranes,<sup>1</sup> and the other a crane standing on one leg. These last are but illustrations, and *very* doubtful ones; but our argument is this. Supposing that the forms of the Hebrew letters had lost even the remotest resemblance to the things which they once represented—and that the *names* of the large majority of them had been phonetically corrupted, so as to have lost all trace of their original significance—supposing, too, that other historical links in the chain of evidence had been broken—still, if we could only *in two or three cases* have distinctly proved that in spite of these corruptions the alphabetic signs certainly had such an origin, would any one have hesitated about accepting the explanation as an adequate one for the entire series of letters? Would any one have hesitated, even if *all* direct *proof* failed, and the explanation were merely suggested as possible? Surely not; and the *a priori* simplicity and naturalness of the explanation would help, as in the case of language, to give it immediate weight. In both cases we have direct proof to a considerable extent; but even an hypothesis, resting on no direct proof, deserves attention, and sometimes even inspires conviction, if it be clear, adequate, and intrinsically probable, particularly if it be only rivalled by theories which rest their claims on ‘elementary unintelligibility’ or which begin by abandoning the problem altogether. But onomatopœia, as a theory of the formation of language, is something more than an hypothesis; it rests on the basis of a large induction; and it furnishes a remarkably close analogy to other processes of the human mind.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Turbabis versus, nec litera tota volabit,  
Unam perdidderis si Palamedis avem.’ Mart. xiii. 75.  
i.e. they no longer represent the letter, if one crane be removed.

‘Haec gruis effigies Palamedica porrigitur Φ.’ Auson. *Idyll.*

<sup>2</sup> Words whether written or spoken are *signs*; to convey an impression to others we must imitate either the sound or the shape of that which produced it. ‘L’onomatopée est donc le type des langues

So that we are not disturbed when our opponents tell us that we can produce few direct and indisputable imitations in illustration of our theory. In the first place it is not a fact that we can produce only a *few* even of these. We can produce more than enough for the purpose ; and more even than might have been expected because the very theory as we have stated it admits for the rapid tendency of language to *become* mechanical by corruption.<sup>1</sup> At first, as we have said already, people hate to use a word which is a *mere* sound to them, alike strange and unmeaning. Their *own* language they will use all their life without the vaguest consciousness of the etymology or original meaning of any one of its words, because it is familiar to them, and they are as indifferent to its obliterations as they are to the blurred and dented surface of a piece of money in their own coinage. But they will not use a foreign or strange word, until, like a coin, it has been, to use the technical term, *surfrappé* with an image and superscription which they understand. If a foreign word be introduced they will either not use it at all, or not until they have twisted it into some shape which shall explain itself to them. Let any one try to introduce such a word—not being in any sense imitative—and he will find himself fail as egregiously as the Emperor Tiberius. We see then, from watching the laws and instincts still at work, that *words not self-explanative* would have had no chance of obtaining currency at the dawn of language, and that therefore the most vital and powerful roots must have been not arbitrary but self-explaining, i.e. imitative ; and also that



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prononcées, et l'hiéroglyphe le type des langues écrites.' Nodier, *Dict. des Onomatopées*, p. II.

<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Lang.* pp. 57–61, where numerous instances are given from the names of horses, of ships, and of flowers. Prof. Müller gives some from the names of inns (ii. 530 sqq.). Many are supplied in *Philolog. Trans.* v. 138 (by Dr. Whewell), and by Mr. Isaac Taylor in his admirable work on *Words and Places*, pp. 409 sqq. Steinthal also mentions a few, *Gesch. d. Sprachwissensch.* s. 6 : e.g. Vormund, Leumund from *Munt* protection, not from *Mund* mouth ; Zanktüffe for Xanthippe, &c.

the process of phonetic corruption is such as to lead us to expect *à priori* that but few words, compared with the whole number, would retain a positive and unmistakable trace of their primitive origin, precisely in the same way as, and for the same reason that, only a few letters in the alphabet have retained their original and significant shape.<sup>1</sup> But if the words which retained such a trace were even far fewer than they are, we should still be entitled to believe that they revealed to man (as has been previously explained) the great and wonderful discovery which lies at the root of all language—the discovery that the physical and spiritual worlds with all their phenomena are capable of analysis, of expression, and of communication by a world of vocal sounds.

2. It is another, and perhaps it will be considered a more telling form of the same objection, that ‘we<sup>2</sup> speak of a cow, not of a *moo*; of a lamb, not of a *baa*. . . . If this principle of onomatopœia is applicable anywhere, it would

<sup>1</sup> Let us take an instance; we assert the imitative origin of language, and some one objects, ‘But the word horse is not imitative of a neigh;’ and if we answer, ‘Yes, it ultimately was so,’ people laugh. Yet horse is derived from the unquestionable onomatopœia *hrēsch* ‘to neigh,’ though one cannot always bring so distinct a proof at once. Now assert the imitative, pictorial origin of the alphabet, and some one objects that *Mem* means ‘water,’ and the sign  does not in the least resemble water. Good; but the original sign (much as in our own cursive character) was like the Chinese , and represented *waves*. It would greatly assist those who really wish to arrive at truth on this subject, if they would bear these analogies constantly in mind; and that is my reason for dwelling on them here. But the majority of those who know nothing about the matter content themselves with the refutation implied by a stolidly self-complacent smile;—just as for years people used to refute the theory of the world’s diurnal revolution on its axis. This *στρατιωτική ἀλογία* is no new thing:

‘Dixeris haec inter varicosos Centuriones,  
Continuo crassum ridet Vulfenius ingens;

Et centum Graecos curto centusse licetur.’ Pers. v. 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures*, i. 344-351, 1st ed. I have not shirked a single argument, or shadow of an argument, which I could find in these Lectures, or in the writings of Pott, Steinthal, &c.

be in the formation of the names of animals. Yet we listen in vain for any similarity between goose and cackling, hen and clucking, duck and quacking, sparrow and chirping, dove and cooing, hog and grunting, cat and mewling, between dog and barking, yelping, snarling, or growling.'

To say nothing of the fact that this aggressive sentence supplies us for its construction no less than twelve confessed onomatopœias, I may perhaps refer to the entire answer to the previous objection, as well as to the whole of my second chapter 'On the Naming of Animals,' as a sufficient proof that we *do find the principle most remarkably at work* in the large majority of animal names, especially in those languages in which we should be most reasonable in expecting it, such as Sanskrit, Hebrew, Chinese, and the languages of savage tribes. Before entering on the argument we may oppose assertion with assertion and say with M. Nodier:<sup>1</sup> 'La plupart des animaux sont caractérisés par l'onomatopée.' Even were it true, which we shall see good reason to doubt, that in this handful of selected names, there is no trace of imitation, there are *hosts* of names in which there *is* such a trace, and these would be enough to prove the real point for which alone we have been contending. Such, for instance, are horse, buck, hog, cow, ai-ai, agouti, lion,<sup>2</sup> koolookamba, cuckoo, crow, crane, crake, quail, peewhit, chough, owl, buzzard, sandpiper, pigeon,<sup>3</sup> daw, tit, finch, whip-poor-will, cricket, &c.

That there are numerous instances where the ultimate name has been derived from some other attribute of the animal is only what we should expect in the growth of language. Although the names here urged against us *are*

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. des Onomatopées*, p. 38. Cf. Pott, *Doppelung*, pp. 29, 51 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Hebr. לָבִיא, 'rugiendi sonum imitans,' Gesen. Thes. s.v. Cf. Germ. Löwe; and the old Egyptian *mouez*. The name agouti is from its cry *couy*.

<sup>3</sup> From the onomatop. *pipi*, pipire. Vid. Diez, s.v. Piccione.

mostly onomatopoeitic, it would be quite easy to select as many that are not. The selection of such instances as a disproof of our principle would be analogous, as an argument, to the inference that the names of animals in the Romance languages are not derived from Latin because *renard*, *blaireau*, *belette*, *mouton*, *crapeau*, *hochequeue*, *moineau*, have no connection with *vulpes*, *meles*, *mustela*, *ovis*, *rana*, *motacilla*, or *passer*; or that the names of birds are not generally onomatopoeitic—though even the ancients<sup>1</sup> had observed this fact—because *red-breast*, *wagtail*, *eagle*, *vulture*, *falcon*, may not be. ‘The most immediate and the most naïve sensations of a people always end,’ says M. Nodier, ‘by disappearing before its illusions.’ For instance, almost every name given to the species of the genus *Goatsucker* is an onomatopœia (*Churn-owl*, *Night-jar*, *Spinner*, *Jar-owl*, &c.), of which an Australian variety is called *More-pork*, an American variety *Whip-poor-will*, and another (*Caprimulgus Lyra*) *Chuck Will’s Widow*, each of these names being crude analogies from its cry: yet over these natural and distinctive names how constantly prevails the name *Αἰγοθήλης*, *caprimulgus*, *tête-chèvre*, *Ziegenmelker*, Russian *kozodoi*, *goatsucker*, &c., from a stupid superstition as old as the time of Aristotle (*Hist. Anim.* ix. 30, 2), which is not even yet extinct.

I will not however rest on any of these general considerations, but will at once come still more closely to the point and examine each of the words *which Mr. Max Müller has himself chosen* to disprove our theory; taking his argument sentence by sentence from the beginning. Nearly every paragraph will show whether there is any ground for his allegation that ‘most of these onomatopœias vanish as we trace our own names back to Anglo-Saxon and Gothic, or compare them with their cognates in Greek, Latin, or Sans-

<sup>1</sup> Σχέδον γὰρ τὰ πλείεστα τῶν ὀρνέων ἀπὸ τῆς φωνῆς ἔχει τὴν σημασίαν. *Athen.* ix. 392. This is especially the case in Latin: *grus*, *gracculus*, *bubo*, *strix*, *buteo*, &c. Pott, *Doppelung*, p. 51.

krit.' Reversing this sentence, we should be inclined to say that on the contrary *it is only by such tracing and comparing* that we can, in many cases, prove the imitative nature of the word.

'*We speak of a cow, not of a moo.*' A strange instance this! since 'cow,' as we have seen already, is *unquestionably* imitative in origin, and is admitted to be so, if one must quote an authority, by M. Pictet himself. Yet simply because the imitation is not *obvious*, a child has to learn how to get at the word cow, by crossing to it over the onomatopœic stepping-stone 'moo.'

'*Of a lamb, not of a baa.*' Yet the Sanskrit word for a ram is *bhêda*, as the Danish is *beede*, and the French *bélier*; and all three come from baa! The derivation of 'lamb,' like that of several names for sheep, is uncertain, so we will say nothing about it, only as before calling attention to the consequent necessity for the imitative stepping-stone baa-lamb, and to the fact that if 'lamb' be not imitative, many words for lamb in other languages are, e.g. the Swiss baa-geli, the Swedish *bagge*, the Malay *biri-biri*.

'*There is no connection between goose and cackling.*' Are we so sure of this? Almost certainly there *is*. Mr. Wedgwood mentions that in Lithuania *guz-guz* is a cry to call geese; but setting this aside, and accepting the Aryan and non-interjectional origin of the word, it is derived from the Sanskrit *haṇsa*; Greek *χην*; Lat. *anser*; Germ. *gans*, &c.<sup>1</sup> And what is the derivation of *hansa*? Let M. Pictet, always anxious to avoid an onomatopœia when he can, tell us: 'La racine est probablement *has*, ridere, par allusion au cri peu mélodieux de l'oiseau et à la manière dont il ouvre son bec pour le pousser' (*Les Aryas Primitifs*, i. 388). 'Goose' then is a word which, so far from having 'no connection with cackling,' is *doubly* imitative, and is solely suggested by

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<sup>1</sup> The French *oie* is from *avicula*, an interesting instance of the use of the general for the special, and a proof of the value attached to the bird; compare our 'birds' for 'partridges.'

cackling!<sup>1</sup> And this its imitative character is further established by the fact that a similar root for the name is discoverable all over the world, from Iceland to Japan, not only in Aryan, but even in the remotest Allophylian languages!<sup>2</sup> Moreover in other instances the name given to the bird is an unconcealed onomatopœia, as for instance in the Scotch *claik* or *clake*.

‘*There is no similarity between hen and clucking.*’ To expect ‘*similarity*’ is to misunderstand the conditions of the problem, as already explained. Nevertheless the name ‘hen’ (Sanskrit *Kānaka*, Persian *Kank*, German *Hahn*, *Huhn*, *Henne*) is as certainly imitative as is cock, and expresses clucking distinctly enough. Of the Sanskrit *Kuhkuta*, Pictet says: ‘C’est là une onomatopée que l’on retrouve dans l’ancien Slave kokoshu, &c.’ *Kukkubha* is ‘un autre nom imitatif.’ *Krkavāku* is still more remarkable, being formed from *vāku*,<sup>3</sup> the creature that cries *krka*, ‘un mot par lui-même imitatif du cri guttural’ (Pictet, i. 396). Even Professor Pott, who is always *most* cautious in admitting an onomatopœia, sees it without hesitation in the word cock, quoting the verb *cucurrire*,<sup>4</sup> a distinct invention for the purpose, adopted by the author of ‘*Philomela*:’

‘*Cucurrire solet gallus, gallina gracillat,*’ l. 25.

<sup>1</sup> It is connected with many other onomatopœias, such as *χάλω*, yawn, *gackern*, *gingrire*, &c. Wüllner, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, s. 27. The name of the bird is almost always imitative—Swedish *gaas*, Danish *gaas*, Mexican *Halacatl*, &c.

<sup>2</sup> It is curious to observe that Varro—knowing, of course, nothing whatever about the origin of the word—*did* instinctively find a ‘similarity between goose and cackling;’ for he says, ‘*De his pleraque ab suis vocibus, ut haec: upupa, cuculus, corvus, hirundo, ulula, bubo; item haec: pavo, ANSER, gallina, columba.*’ *De Ling. Lat.* v. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Formed on the exact analogy of the African kooloo-kamba, the creature which cries *kooloo* (Du Chaillu’s *Travels*); and the Galla *dada-goda*, for which see Wedgwood, i. v.

<sup>4</sup> See his paper *Zur Culturgeschichte* (on the names of fowl and goat). I do not know where it appeared. Professor Pott was so kind as to send me a copy of the paper.



'*There is no similarity between a duck and quacking.*' As we have already proved and illustrated, the objective repercussion of a subjective impression in many cases neither aims at nor pretends to '*similarity*' even in the first instance, and much less after the phonetic modification of centuries. And next, the name 'duck' is derived from the same root as the German 'tauchen,' from the animal's habit of diving; but duck, tauchen, dab, dive, &c., are imitative in origin, although here the imitation is not from the sound which the bird makes. Yet from this sound we have the name *παπια* a duck in modern Greek, which Diefenbach compares with the Italian *papero* a gosling, and the Spanish *parpar* to quack.<sup>1</sup>

'*Between sparrow and chirping.*' Sparrow is a very doubtful word, but if we compare such cognate forms as *sprew*, *spreuwe*, *sparavière*, &c., it is impossible to *assert* that it was *not* originally mimetic; and we fully believe it was.<sup>2</sup> And if we hear no chirp in the word 'sparrow,' we do in the names of many other birds which twitter and chirp, as, for instance, *σπίγγος*, *σπιζα*, pinson, finch, fringilla,<sup>3</sup> linnet, pipit, tit, &c.

'*Between dove and cooing;*'—but there is a *direct* similarity between cooing and the *synonyms* for dove, turtle, culver, pigeon (from pipi, v. ante), and cushat,<sup>4</sup> so that out of five

<sup>1</sup> Wedgwood, i. 497. The names *anas*, *ῥήσσα*, the French *canard*, the Mongol *ngusun*, &c., are *probably* imitative. Wüllner, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, s. 27.

<sup>2</sup> May it not be connected with the Greek *ψάπ* 'a starling,' an imitative word from *ψαίπω*, *I scrape*? The mere confusion between starling and sparrow is nothing, because instances of much more startling interchanges of name may be adduced, as in vultures, '*fox*,' and wolf, &c.

<sup>3</sup> The Sanskrit *bhrnga*, which also means a bumble-bee; 'ce qui ne laisse aucun doute sur son caractère d'onomatopée.' Pictet, i. 486.

<sup>4</sup> Which Pictet derives from *cū* cow, and *sceotan* to rush—the bird that rushes to cows!!! He makes the Anglo-Saxon *culufre*, 'culver,' mean *cow-lover*; surely it would be even better than this to connect it with the Sanskrit *kalarava*, 'l'oiseau dont la voix est un murmure.' The analogies of goatsucker and *bergeronette* for wag-tail, and *Pferdehüter* for a Peruvian bird, and *Vyaghrāta*, tiger-goer, for lark, &c., are not to the point, since there is no connection between pigeons and cows.

names *four* are from the bird's murmuring voice. But besides this, 'dove' is connected with *dive*, *dab* (cf. *dab-chick*, *tap*, &c.), from the very remarkable characteristic which it has of ducking<sup>1</sup> the head, whence too is derived the Latin *columba* (cf. *κολυμβάω*); and therefore dove no less than duck is imitative, though not from the bird's voice.

'*There is no similarity between hog and grunting.*' Surely a most unfortunate assertion, as will be very apparent from Mr. Wedgwood's note on the word. 'Hog, Breton, *hoc'h houc'h*, swine, from *houc'ha* to grunt. So Lap. *snorkeset* to grunt, *snorke* a pig, &c.' Moreover, 'grunter' is in English an actual synonym for pig, as Mr. Tennyson shows us:—

If thou be he, or dragged mawkin thou  
That tends her bristled *grunters* in the sludge.

*The Princess.*

With the Italian *ciacco*, the French *cochon* and *goret* (cf. *χοίρος*), the Russian *cushka*, or—not to quote the invariably imitative name in other Aryan languages—the Sanskrit *sūkara* ('qui fait sū, son imitatif pour grognement,' cf. *swine*, &c.) before him, it is strange that Professor Müller should have hazarded this instance.

'*There is no similarity between cat and mewling.*' Not in English, at first sight, but in the most ancient of tongues—the Chinese—a cat is 'Miau'! The word 'cat' is traced back by Pictet to an African origin, and so it is impossible to say whether or no its original form was imitative. That it was so seems very probable from the imitative forms which several developments of the word take, of which the most striking is the German *Katze*, which, I must repeat (whatever may have been its origin), 'obviously catches an echo of the animal's remarkable spit,' as is rendered nearly certain by a comparison of the Wallachian *mëtze*,<sup>2</sup> *pisicë*; unless indeed it be from the sound made in calling the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pictet, i. 400. Wedgwood, s.v.

<sup>2</sup> Diez, s.v. *Gatto*; and Wedgwood, *Et. Dict.*

animal, like the Polish *kic kici*, and the English *puss*. If so, then in this case, as in the cries made in calling a pig (*cushu cushu, chig chig, &c.*), we see the various points of possible origin for an onomatopoeic word; it is one of the many instances which connect a *Lautgeberde* with an imitation. In other words we see that the sound made by an animal is often instinctively adopted as the sound to invite or repel its approach, and so passes into the animal's name.

Lastly, '*there is no similarity between dog and barking, yelping, or snarling.*' Is it certain? The Icelandic '*doggr*' at any rate looks very like a growl;<sup>1</sup> and, if not, the synonyms Hound, German *Hund*, Greek *Κύων*, Canis, the Sanskrit *Ḍvañ*, are distinctly imitative, and are recognised as such by Pictet, who adds that, except on the imitative principle, it is impossible to account for the wide similarity between the names for the dog among various nations. A name bow-wow *might*, indeed, have been invented, 'yet strange to say, we hardly ever find a civilised language in which the dog was so called' (ii. 312). 'True, and for this perhaps a *very sufficient reason* may be given. Although, as far back as history carries us, the dog has been a domesticated animal, yet it must at one time have been wild, and it may probably have received a name, or some of its names, while in this condition. Now it is at least doubtful *whether the bark is a dog's natural utterance*, and whether in its original state the dog *did* bark. For whole races of dogs, and perhaps it may be said *all* wild dogs, do not know how to bark—for instance, the Esquimaux dogs, and those which run wild in the Pampas, in Chili, and in the Antilles, which only howl. Indeed Prichard,<sup>2</sup> who notices this fact, mentions the conjecture that the dog's bark '*originated in an*

<sup>1</sup> To say nothing of the fact that the dog furnishes to language his full share of onomatopœias; such as the words βαῦζω, baubari, ὑλακτεῖν, beller, aboyer, βύγχος, knurren, &c. In some Canadian languages the dog is called *gagnenon*.

<sup>2</sup> Prichard, *Nat. Hist. of Man*, p. 33 (ed. Norris). *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, Feb. 1, 1861.

*attempt to imitate the human voice*'! If this conjecture, however apparently ludicrous, be correct, then men will have contributed more to the language of dogs, than dogs to the language of men; for, as Dr. Daniel Wilson<sup>1</sup> observes, the words bark, yelp, howl, snap, snarl, whine, whimper, are 'words directly derived from the dog language'! At any rate it is certain that the dogs left by the Spaniards on Juan Fernandez to destroy the goats on which the pirates fed, had, when found thirty years afterwards by Don Antonio Ulloa, *forgotten* how to bark, and only imitated very awkwardly the bark of other dogs. It is known too that some puppies brought by Mackenzie from Western America were unable to bark, though their puppies acquired the power. There would be a reason then why *bow-wow* should not be *the particular form* assumed by any onomatopoetic name of the dog.

'What really took place was this,' says Professor Müller rather dogmatically. 'The mind received numerous impressions from everything that came within its ken. A dog did not stand before it at once properly defined and classified, but it was defined under different aspects—now as a savage animal, now as a companion, sometimes as a watcher, sometimes as a thief, occasionally as a swift hunter, at other times as a coward or an unclean beast. From every one of these impressions a name might be framed, and after a time the process of natural elimination would reduce the number of these names, and leave only a few or only one, which like *canis* would become the proper name of the dog' (ii. 312). Now, would it not be amazing if the *most* obvious aspect of all—the noise made by the animal, which would be the first thing noticed about it, as it is the first thing noticed by all children—should *not* have contributed one of the characteristics which suggested a name? Secondly, observe that the name which in the Aryan family *did*

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<sup>1</sup> *Prehistoric Man*, i. 83. Many German words, as *winseln*, *heulen*, &c., might have been added.

prevail was the one derived from the onomatopœia *ṣvan*. Thirdly, observe that out of *five* Sanskrit names for dog, *three* are imitative, viz. *ṣvan*, *rudatha* from *rud* (rudire), 'l'animal qui hurle et gémit,' and *bhacha* 'the barker' from the root *bhach*, to bark! Do not these facts speak for themselves?

Surely, therefore, even when we meet Professor Müller on ground selected by himself, we can abundantly vindicate the applicability of our theory—throwing, we trust, some further light on the *nature* of the theory in the course of our enquiry. *We* have dwelt upon it in detail because *he* does so, being desirous, from his well-merited authority in all matters of philology, to give full consideration to all the arguments on the subject which we could find in his writings, and to state the reasons why they do *not* carry conviction to our minds. To us the answer appears complete and convincing.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## FERTILITY OF ONOMATOPOETIC ROOTS.

‘Sed cunctas species animantium nemo notabit,  
Atque sonos ideo dicere quis poterit?’

Alb. Ov. Juveninus, *Philomel.* 68.

IN his second series of Lectures, the Professor returns to the attack with undiminished vigour, and as though he felt the insecurity of the outpost which we have just been trying to carry by assault, he entirely abandons it, and retreats behind another which is presumed to be more strongly fortified. In point of fact he cedes by implication his previous position; ‘*Ibi omnis effusus labor!*’ Nevertheless, as the cession is only apparent, we do not regret the trouble we have taken to secure our ground; and so we proceed to the new points of attack and defence.

‘The onomatopœic theory,’ he says (*Lectures*, ii. 91), ‘*goes very smoothly as long as it deals with cackling hens and quacking ducks*; but round that poultry-yard there is a dead wall, and we soon find that it is behind that wall that language really begins.’

So far as this means merely that natural imitations are *not* in themselves language, but only *the materials of it, and the stepping-stones to it*, we not only agree with such a view but have from the first been asserting and illustrating it. If however it means that out of the sphere of animal names the imitative principle is excluded from its immense share in the elements of language, then we must once more emphatically dissent. For the meaning will then be the same as that

which has so often been asserted in other forms, and which we will consider as the third objection, viz. that

3. Onomatopœias are 'like artificial flowers without a root. They are *sterile*, and are unfit to express anything beyond the one object which they imitate.'

Professor Müller illustrates this by saying that there are but few derivatives from the root 'cuck,' which is found in cuckoo, and cock, and that 'cuckoo stands by itself like a stick in a living hedge.' Heyse implies the same (s. 92) by his remark that many onomatopœias are not 'old fruitful roots of language, but modern inventions which remain isolated in language, and are incapable of originating any families of words, because their meaning is too limited and special to admit of a manifold application.'

There is a certain *primâ facie* truth in this remark, but it seems to us wholly immaterial to the question before us, which is merely this, 'Did language *originate* from interjectional and imitative roots?' With the reasons urged against the interjectional origin we have already dealt; and it is surely no refutation whatever of the imitative origin of another great division of language to say that *some* imitative roots (and especially modern ones) are infructuous, or nearly so. The *paucity* of the original roots of Language is an admitted fact, and if the difficult combination of c's or k's in 'cuckoo' be a root of which little use is made we cannot be surprised, although even from this root, as Professor Müller himself admits, various words have been derived, and the list of derivatives might be largely increased;<sup>1</sup> but at any rate there are plenty of other roots which we believe to be imitative, and *some which every one will admit to be so*, which so far from being sterile are 'the mothers of thousands.' On the very page from which we have been quoting, Professor Müller supplies us with one—the root *ru* or *kru*, which passes through all kinds of fruitful metamorphoses, and 'has ever

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<sup>1</sup> The verb to cock, cog, cockade, coquet, coxcomb, &c.; in short, so many that even this root *cannot* be called a sterile one.

so many relations from a rumour to a row.' But this, says the Professor, 'is derived from a root which has a general predicative power. It is not a mere imitation of the cry of the raven; it embraces many cries from the harshest to the softest.' Here apparently we are at issue. For whether the root was originally suggested by the cry of the raven or not—and this is a matter on which dogmatism is impossible—it is most certainly a natural sound, a sound caught from nature, an *imitative* sound, and *therefore the words formed from it were formed in strictest conformity with the Imitative theory.* 'It might have been applied to the nightingale as well as to the raven,' says Prof. Müller. In the absence of any proof we should hold this to be very questionable, but if so it only shows how exquisitely delicate were the nuances which a word might receive by differences of pronunciation. Every one will admit that crow and croon are onomatopœias; yet the one is used of the harsh caw of the rook, and the other of the soft moan of doves. Every one will admit that these names of the grasshopper in different languages—Sanskrit *çiri*, Armenian *dzghrid*, Greek *γρύλλος*, Cymric *grillieddyz*, Basque *quirquirra*, Mahratta *râlra*, Chinese *sirsor*, Hebrew *tslâtsâl*, and many more which might be adduced<sup>1</sup>—are all imitative: yet how immensely are they varied by the fantasies of imitation! How is this to be explained? Simply by the fact to which it is so often necessary to recur, that words are not mere imitations but subjective echoes and reproductions—repercussions which are modified both organically and ideally—which have moreover been immensely blurred and disintegrated by the lapse of ages. *Kôka* in Sanskrit is a confessed onomatopœia, and it means a goose, a cuckoo, a frog, a lizard, and a wolf. How wide then must be the differences expressed by one and the same imitation! But we leave it to the reader whether it is more reasonable

<sup>1</sup> Pictet, i. 528. Our blunted senses can no more realise the original delicacy of the appellative faculty than they can attain to the keen perfection in which they still exist in the savage. Lepsius, *Paläogr.* p. 21, quoted by Pott, *Etym. Forsch.* ii. 261.



to suppose that the root 'kru' was a 'phonetic type,' having 'a general predicative power,' arrived at by abstraction from the combined influence of all sorts of noises, from the murmur of rivers and the barking of dogs to the songs of nightingales—or to suppose with us that it was an imitative root, the echo of *some one* distinct sensuous impression, which subsequently was modified to suit other sounds, and which passed through a whole cycle of meanings by the working of processes which we shall hereafter consider? Which of the two suppositions is most in accordance with common probability, and with the remarkable feebleness of the power of abstraction among all uncivilised men?

But we shall perhaps best refute the asserted sterility of imitative roots, by producing a few instances of the vast range of conceptions which they have been made to express. If, in a few traceable instances, an onomatopœia be found to fructify so far as to convey notions and impressions which might be thought to be *infinitely* removed from the possibility of even a metaphorical expression by sounds borrowed from the outer world, we shall see that these sounds, raw and vulgar as they may originally have been, were the natural sound-cells<sup>1</sup> in which thought was quickened and developed into perfect speech. Whether the earliest origin of a word can be definitely *proved* or not, let it be considered that the choice rests in every case between an ultimate imitation or interjection — and *nothing*. Most etymologists when they have got to a root stop there, at the most interesting point of the enquiry, pretending to offer no explanation whatever of the root itself, although if they could do so they would obviously be throwing a flood of light on the whole history of the word, and would also be inevitably illustrating the influence of certain primary psychological laws, the observation of which is of the utmost importance

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<sup>1</sup> The prominence recently given to Mr. Darwin's theories naturally suggests this metaphor. Since writing it I have met with Aug. Schleicher's pamphlet (previously referred to) on the bearings of Language upon the hypothesis of development.

both to philosophy and history. It is true that the Mimetic School (if I may be allowed such a term in treating of a subject in which the nomenclature is as yet cumbrous and only tentative) must often stop short of what they believe to be the final step of Etymology; but this does not detract from the value of their actual results, nor diminish their belief in the principle on which they rely. The principle indeed is one which requires the less proof, because we see its daily working and powerful effect even on living languages, and especially in the process of their earliest acquisition.

Let us look at the history of one or two imitative roots, and I think that we shall definitely *prove* how little they deserve the charge of sterility.

For instance, let us take some of the simplest and earliest roots, beginning with *ma*. From the fact that it is among the most facile, and therefore among the earliest sounds uttered by children, we have it (and cognate sounds) first applied in almost all languages to name the simplest and tenderest and earliest known of relationships—'motherhood.' This is not an *hypothesis* but a *certainty*; <sup>1</sup> it is one of those linguistic discoveries which must be accepted as established facts from which to start in all enquiries about the origin of language. 'It is impossible to doubt,' says M. Pictet, 'of their nature—purely phonetic and imitative of the earliest infantile syllables—when one finds them reappear among the most diverse nations. The reduplications *papa*, *mama*, so familiar to our European ears, have astonished more than one traveller who discovered them among the negroes of Africa, no less than among the savages of America and Oceania.'<sup>2</sup> For a comparative list of such terms we must refer to the interesting and ingenious essay of

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<sup>1</sup> Lists have often been published. Among others, see Nodier, *Dict. des Onomatopées*, pp. 18-21 (taken from De Brosse).

<sup>2</sup> Pictet, ii. 348. The fact that in Sanskrit and most Aryan languages they are attached to a verbal root in no way detracts from their imitative origin.

Buschmann, *Ueber den naturlaut*.<sup>1</sup> In it he points out that this identity of terms is due to the fact we have mentioned, and is no proof whatever of the connection or relationship of Languages. It is one of the merits of the Imitative theory that it explains, not in this case only but many others, the similarity of a few words in languages which, as may be easily proved, are neither genetically nor historically connected with each other, but which have probably been separate from the very dawn of human life.

But the root *ma* (or *am*,<sup>2</sup> which is the same thing) does *not* remain sterile. We get from it at once, as we should expect alike from the limited range of a child's experience and his limited command of articulate sounds—a name for other relations—as the Latin *amita* aunt, the German *amme*<sup>3</sup> a nurse, the Spanish and Portuguese *ama* a housewife, *amo* master of a house, *amma* screech-owl, from its supposed affection for its young (cf. stork from *στίξγω*)—and, indeed, in all probability the root 'amo'<sup>4</sup> I love, with all its immense stream of derivatives.

<sup>1</sup> The essay of Buschmann's here referred to will be found translated in the sixth volume of the *Philological Society's Transactions* (1852-1853). Buschmann shows that even as far back as the Etymol. Magnum these sounds had been noticed, thus: *πάππος δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν παλδων τῶν μικρῶν προσφωνήσεως, ὡς φησιν Ὀμηρος, ποτὶ γούνατα παππάζουσιν* (II. v. 406). *ὀνοματοπεποιηται οὖν ἡ λέξις.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hebr. **אִם** = mother, grandmother, &c. It is strange that Plato does not in the *Cratylus* notice this syllable, which would have afforded so singularly strong an illustration of the point contended for (viz. the intrinsic meaning and appropriateness of certain consonants) in sections 91-94. C. Lenorman sees in this reticence 'une réserve conseillée par la gravité religieuse de cette syllable *μν*, qui est le nom même des mystères.' *Comment. sur le Cratyle*, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> Diez, ed. Donkin, s. v. *Ama*; and cf. Pictet, ii. 350.

<sup>4</sup> We say, 'in all probability.' If any one prefers to suppose that 'amo' is from the Sanskrit *am* 'to rush forward,' he may; and he will have Professor Müller on his side. (*Lectures*, ii. 91.) Let me here observe that the mere production of some analogous Sanskrit form as the derivation of a word is by no means a refutation of its imitative origin. I have already called attention to many admitted Sanskrit *onomatopœias*.

Then by an easy and natural transference we get the Latin *mamma*, the breast, which is also found with the same meaning all over the world; and the Dutch *moeder* the womb, &c. And so by simple laws of association we get to the English *mammet*,<sup>1</sup> Swiss *mämmi* a doll, German *memme* a coward, and *memmerei* poltroonery. So widely and so rapidly does the ripple spread on the surface of language.

Equally universal, equally fruitful, and equally rapid in its development is the cognate root *pa*. In Greek alone we have *πατήρ* a father, *πάππος* a grandfather, *παπτάζω* to wheedle and to prattle, *πάππος* the first down on the cheek of youth, *παπποσπέρματα* the bearded seeds of the dandelion, *πάππῳδης* woolly. In Latin we have *papparium* (the English pap), and *papilla* the bosom (cf. *mammilla*). In Sardinian *papai* to eat, in Italian (and Russian) *pappo* bread; in Spanish and Portuguese (connected with *papilla*) we have *papo* a dewlap, or anything fat and puffy. Then from *Papa* as a title of respect, we get Pope, Papist, Papistry. In German we have *pappe* in the sense of paste, paste-board.

Thus from some of the most obvious derivatives of two very simple imitative roots we at once and without any shadow of difficulty get meanings so different, and apparently so much beyond the range of onomatopoetic representation, as aunt, owl, breast, doll, coward, dandelion-seed, bread, a fatty protuberance, the Pope of Rome, and paste-board! Who after this shall assert the sterility of imitative roots?

From *ta* and *da*, two other of the earliest sounds, we get to *dade*,<sup>2</sup> an old English word for teaching a child to walk; to *toddle*, to *dawdle*, to *dandle*; the French *dandin*, a simpleton; the Italian *dandolo* a toy, and *tartagliare* to stutter; the

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confounded with *Mammet* (from Mahomet). See Wedgwood, ii. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Diez (ed. Donkin), s. vv. *Dandin* and *Tartagliare*. Wedgwood, s. v. *Dade*.

Dutch *tateren* to stammer; the Icelandic *totta* to suck, teat, &c. (cf. *τίτθη*, &c.)

Again, from *ba*, to mention only a few out of many, we have in Latin *babiger*,<sup>1</sup> *bubulus*, and *baburrus* stupid (Gloss. Isid.), *babæcalus* a trifler (Arnob. iv. 141), *basium*, buss, a kiss; in Greek we have βαβάζω, βαμβαλίζειν, I stammer; in Hebrew בָּבֶל confundere, בָּבֶל Babel,<sup>2</sup> Babylon. In the Romance languages *babbo* a father (Ital.), *babbuino* baboon, *beffa* a scoffing (shooting out the lips), *babbeo* a blockhead, *bambino* a doll, *bava*<sup>3</sup> slaver (cf. *Baviëca* the name of the Cid's charger), Spanish *babosa* a slug, *badare* to gape; then through the Scotch word 'abeigh' to stand gazing or gaping at a thing, we have 'abeyance,' and 'to stand at bay,' &c. In French we have *babines* large lips, *beyer*, *bavardage*, *babiller*, *babiole*, &c.<sup>4</sup> In English babe, babble, baboon, baffle, &c. We have not nearly exhausted the list, and indeed the fertility of this root may perhaps form the excuse or apology for those very bold theorists who have erroneously supposed that the letter B is a picture of the closed lips requisite for the enunciation of this important labial.<sup>5</sup>

Again, from *ta* and *ba* as emblematic of early, confused, inarticulate sounds we get such national names as Tatars, from *ta-ta* the Chinese onomatopœia for a barbarian, whose language sounds to them like a mere collection of meaningless noises—and the word barbarian<sup>6</sup> itself from the Sanskrit *varvara* a jabberer or confused talker. Of similar origin is

<sup>1</sup> See Forcellini, *Lex. Tot. Lat.* s. vv.

<sup>2</sup> 'Εβραῖοι γὰρ τὴν σύγχυσιν Βαβέλ καλοῦσι. Jos. *Antt.* i. 5. Compare our 'babble.'

<sup>3</sup> Diez, Wedgwood, Nodier, Scheler, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Nodier, *Notions de Linguistique*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> For the odd notion of Pierius Valerianus, see *Orig. of Lang.* p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> κατ' ὀνοματοποιῖαν ἐπὶ τῶν δυσεκφώρως καὶ τραχέως καὶ σκληρῶς λαλοῦντων, Suid. See the Author's article on 'Barbarian' in Dr. Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, i. 166; and cf. *Types of Mankind*, p. 560; Pictet, *Orig. Ind.* i. p. 55; Renan, *Langues Semitiques*, i. 35; and Mr. Is. Taylor's *Words and Places*, pp. 67, 87.

the name *Zamzummim*,<sup>1</sup> applied by the Hebrews to one of the primitive tribes of Palestine, and transferred, from an instinctive sense of its derivation, as a nickname to the fanatics in the seventeenth century who pretended to speak with tongues precisely as St. Paul applies the word βαῖβαρος in 1 Cor. xiv. 11. Possibly the word Hottentot, and certainly the word Wälsch (from Sanskrit *mlêch*), and the Hebrew עֲבָלִים (from עָבַל to stammer, Ps. lxiii. 1), illustrate the same curious fact—of which, indeed, we see daily instances—that ignorant people of all races and ages regard the language of foreigners as an unmeaning babble. For the surprisingly numerous developments of this word *bar* through almost every shade of meaning we must refer our readers to the pages of Diez, Wedgwood, and other etymologists.

*Ohe jam satis!* we imagine that we hear the reader sigh; nevertheless for the sake of the argument we must detain him a little longer. From the imitation then of inarticulate sounds we get such words as πάρος, παρῖν; French *patte* a foot, *patin* a skate, *patois* a dialect; English *patten* (cf. pittle-pattle, pit-a-pat). From the labial *m* attached to various vowels to reproduce low sounds we get to hum, to mutter, muzzle, *mute*, and to be *mum* for to be silent, whence come mummary, and mumble, and mumps; from the same root come the French *mot* a word, and *motto*, as we see from the line of Lucilius, 'Non audet dicere *muttum*;' the Latin *mussare*, *muse*, and *music*, and amuse; *musca* a fly, and musket—for which latter word and its curious history we must refer to Diez and Scheler—the Greek μύζω, and mystery with all its cognates. Beyond such a word as this language can hardly proceed; it dashes itself in vain against the 'flammantia mœnia mundi,' the adamantine barrier which separates the temporal from the spiritual, the unseen from the seen. It is one of those words which, as Iamblichus says, 'being more excellent than every image is yet expressed by an image.' Yet to this distance Language attains by

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Grove, s. v. *Zamzummim*, *Dict. of the Bible*.

barely a single stride from the simple imitation of the sound naturally produced by closing the lips. Mr. Müller derives *mutus* from the Sanskrit *mū* to bind, and contemptuously refuses to give up either it, or many other words for which we should claim an imitative origin, 'to the Onomatopœic School.' In this we are convinced that he will find *very few* followers. That *μῦ* (like *mum*) is simply a natural sound made by closing the lips, and that from it come first *μύω*, then *μυίω*, then *μύσσης*, then *μυστήριον*, and a number of derivatives of every shade of meaning from *μῦσος* 'hatred' to *μυχός* 'a corner,' *μῦκος* 'phlegm,' and *μύκης* 'a mushroom,' seems to us a fact which can hardly be seriously denied. Dr. Liddell and Dr. Scott collect no less than forty-six such derivatives under the word *μύω*, and that number might very easily be doubled in Greek alone. So much then for the sterility of onomatopœias!

Perhaps if any one class of words could be chosen as presenting an insuperable obstacle to the endeavour to trace them from an imitative origin, it would be the class of *numerals*, the existence of which is due to one of the greatest efforts of analysis and abstraction—an effort in fact such, that to this day many savage tribes have not attained to it. Even Plato<sup>1</sup> argued that the existence of numerals at any rate must depend on custom and convention, since it was impossible that there could be any resemblance between the name of a numeral and the number which it indicated. In modern times the progress of comparative philology has thrown a flood of light on the origin of the numerals; it has shown the pronominal origin of the first, second, and third numerals, and it is most probable that all three sprang from interjectional or imitative elements; for instance, the Sanskrit *ékas*<sup>2</sup> 'one' is etymologically connected with *aham* 'I,'

<sup>1</sup> ἐπεὶ, ὧ βέλτιστε, εἰ θέλεις ἐπὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἔλθειν, πρόθεν οἷσι ἕξειν ὀνόματα ὅμοια ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐπενεγκεῖν, εἰ μὴ ἑᾶς τι τὴν σὴν ὁμολογίαν καὶ συνθήκην κύρος ἔχειν τῶν ὀνομάτων ὁρθότητος πέρι. Plato, *Crat.* p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> Bopp, *Vergl. Gram.* §§ 309 sqq. Donaldson, *Crat.* § 154, &c.

in which there is nothing fanciful in supposing that (as in the Hebrew  $\text{רוּח}$ ) we catch a very natural reproduction of *the act of respiration*. There is however one numeral which comes from an onomatopœia *pur et simple*. It is the word 'myriad,' which is undoubtedly connected with the root  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega$ , I roll or flow. 'The derivation of the idea of a large number from the sight of water falling in infinite drops is too obvious,' says Dr. Donaldson,<sup>1</sup> 'to require any remark.' No one, we hope, will now deny the connection<sup>2</sup> between  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega$  and the obvious onomatopœia *murmur*. The connection between a multitude and sound, and the extremely natural metaphor of waves to describe the roar of a crowd (*unda salutantum*, Virg. ; *turba fluctuantis populi*, Aul. Gell. ;  $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\alpha \varphi\omega\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu$ , Æsch.) show us how probable such a derivation is. Tempting as it is to derive  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\mu\eta\zeta$  'an ant' from this root, we fear that Benfey's attempt to do so is scientifically untenable.<sup>3</sup> But if even a *numeral* can be so easily and directly traced to an imitative sound, there is little reason to doubt the wide applicability of this principle of word-formation.

So that by taking *the very first and simplest illustrations that came to hand*, we have shown that imitative roots are *not* sterile ; that, on the contrary, almost every one of them produces so numerous and diverse an offspring as to show the possibility of expressing by their means every possible conception that Language is capable of expressing at all. And, with all these proofs before us, we say with Steinthal<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cratylus*, § 163, where he also supposes a relationship between  $\chi\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  flow,  $\chi\acute{\iota}\lambda\delta\varsigma$  fodder, and  $\chi\acute{\iota}\lambda\iota\alpha\iota$  thousands.

<sup>2</sup> Benfey did so on the very insufficient ground that the *v* in  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega$  is long, and in *murmūro* short. *Wurzel-lexicon*, i. 16. See the admirable pamphlet *Sur l'Origine des Noms de Nombre*, by Louis Benloew, Giessen, 1861.

<sup>3</sup> The Sanskrit *vamri*, *vamraka*, the Latin *formica*, and the form  $\beta\acute{\omicron}\rho\mu\alpha\zeta$  preserved in Hesychius, seem to render it possible that the root is *vam* = vomere, from the formic acid which the insect throws from its mouth.

<sup>4</sup> *Gram. Log. und Psychol.* p. 309.



that it is *inconceivable* to us that any one should be hardy enough to deny that Onomatopœia was the primeval tendency of language which has furnished us with all elementary words. Those who do so must abandon all attempts to see any connection between sound and meaning, except such as was due to the most absolute and unmeaning chance. Without the aid of imitation the earliest communications of mankind must have been a meaningless jabber of arbitrary sounds, and such, from the very nature of the case, they must always have remained.

## CHAPTER XV.

## DIGNITY OF ONOMATOPEIA.

<sup>c</sup>'Ὀνομασποία, id est, fictio nominis, Græcis *inter maximas habita virtutes*, nobis vix permittitur. Et sunt plurima ita posita ab iis, qui sermonem primi fecerunt, aptantes affectibus vocem.'

QUINTIL. *Instt. Or.* viii. 6.

CONDILLAC complained that to suppose man to have learnt his language from imitation would be to place him below the animals, and this was why he favoured the Interjectional origin rather than the Onomatopoeic. We have seen already that *both* points of origin are requisite, and that neither can be separated from the other; but independently of this, Condillac's objection, which is perfectly worthless as an argument, was founded on the common misconception of supposing that *animal cries* offered the *only* materials for imitation. On the contrary *every* sound of nature contributed its element to human speech—the rustling and whispering of her forest leaves, the howling of her storms, the booming of her seas, the rush of her cataracts, the rippling sequacious murmur of her rivulets. That there must be an intimate connection between nature and language is shown by the manner in which the sound of a language is often a reflex of the geographical conditions by which the people who speak it are surrounded—by the strident hirrient roughness of Northern tongues (for instance) compared with the soft<sup>1</sup> musical vowelled undersong of the sunny South. It

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<sup>1</sup> Greek, removed to the enervating climate of Asia Minor, becomes the soft Ionian.

was suggested by Nodier that the presence or absence of the more remarkable and difficult articulations of language is always explicable by the existence or non-existence of certain animals in the countries where they are spoken, and that the tiger and the rattlesnake have suggested the click of the Hottentot and the rough sibilant of the North American Indian. This may be true or not ; but, as we have shown,<sup>1</sup> onomatopœia rests on a far wider basis than this, and reproduces ideally and articulately that ringing shiver caused by the oscillation of material particles which results from every possible impact. Yet if it were probable that man had been taught to speak by listening to the animals alone, it would be absurd to reject such a conclusion solely in consequence of that *à priori* assumption of human exaltation which has stood so often in the path of science, and which has so often prevented men from reaching the Gate of Honour by making them refuse to pass under the Gate of Humility.

4. It has however been urged, with more of plausibility, that the most obvious and intentional onomatopœias are generally modern and often undignified, and that onomatopœia could never therefore have been a leading principle of Language.

We reply briefly that pure imitations are the only words now open for us to invent, and therefore that many such words are *apparently* modern. Whether they are, in any case, really so, may be doubtful when, to give but one instance, we learn that the Laplanders have the onomatopœia 'to *slam*' in the very same sense as ourselves, although 'countless ages must have elapsed since their ancestors and ours parted from a common stock.'<sup>2</sup> Probably there are not many words which have thus for ages preserved their *exact form* in the mass of *detritus* of which modern languages are composed ; but all we have asserted is the traceable existence, often even to the latest moment of a word's

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<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Wedgwood, i. p. 4.

history, of the original imitative element. And the fact that an onomatopœia is the only word whose invention is still admissible, is an additional proof of our proposition. For what is the reason of this fact? Simply because an onomatopœia is the only word formed in obvious accordance with the earliest principle of language, the only one which is immediately intelligible, the only one which possesses an inherently graphic power, the only one which can add the beauty of novelty and delighted surprise to the effects produced by existing language, the only one which has any chance of a permanent currency. The fact, then, that new words are mostly imitative is so far from furnishing an argument against us that it tells distinctly in our favour. It tends to prove that the only words which can be invented on any reasonable principle are onomatopœias; and therefore points back to onomatopœia as the necessary principle of all language at its commencement.

In the present stereotyped condition of language, in which it has been so largely modified, and its spontaneous development checked in so many ways by the influence of writing and literature, we can hardly be astonished to find that a *direct* sound-imitation, particularly if it be rude and inartistic, is probably too special and limited in significance to give birth to a family of words. Yet the fact that the greatest and most popular poets<sup>1</sup> of every age and nation, from Homer to Tennyson, from Ennius to Göthe, from Archilochus to Bürger and Lamartine, have employed these Echoes of Nature freely, and that the passages in which they have done so have attracted constant attention, is at least sufficient, as I have previously shown,<sup>2</sup> to redeem these words from the position of 'illegitimate pretenders to the dignity

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<sup>1</sup> οἱ χαριέστατοι ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων τὰ μὲν αὐτοὶ τε κατὰ σκευὴν ὀνόματα, συμπλέκοντες ἐπιτηδείως ἀλλήλοις τὰ γράμματα, καὶ τὰς συλλαβὰς δὲ οἰκέως, οἷς ἂν βούλωνται παραστήσαι πάθει, ποικίλως φιλοτεχνουσι. Dion. Hal. *De Comp. Verb.* p. 94. Steinthal, *Gesch. d. Sprachwissensch.* p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Lang.* pp. 91-96.

of language.' The timid rhetoricians of the Silver Age, and the desiccated pedantic grammarians of a later period, might not venture to use such a privilege,<sup>1</sup> but they could at least point with admiration to the *λίγξε βιός*, and the *σίξεν δ' ὄφθαλμός*, and the

*κάρκαϊρε δὲ γαῖα πόδεσσιν  
ορνυμένων ἄμυδις*

of Homer; they could catch the hurtling of battle in

*σκέπτει δ' οὔστ' ὦν τε ῥοῖζον καὶ δοῦπον ἀκόντων,*

and a murmur of the 'hollower-bellowing ocean' in

*ἐξ ἀκαλαρῆταιο βαθυρῥόδου Ὠκεανοῖο.*

Further study and the comparison of more languages would have shown them that there is no poet worthy of the name who does not *abound* in imitative expressions; that these are, in fact, the most appropriate, the most simple, the most passionate, the most picturesque; and that 'poetry reproduces the original process of the mind in which language originates. The coinage of words is the primitive poem of humanity, and the imagery of poetry and oratory is only possible and effective, because it is a continuation of that primitive process which is itself a reproduction of creation.'<sup>2</sup>

There are whole poems—like the *Paradise Lost*—and whole languages—like the Hebrew—which are, one may boldly say, an onomatopœia from beginning to end. An

<sup>1</sup> Quintilian says, '*Minime nobis concessa est ονοματοποιία*,' and he goes on to say that, were it not for the authority of the ancients, they could hardly venture to use such words as *hinnire* and *balare*! (*Instt.* i. 5, 72.) He adds in another place that it was more permissible to the Greeks; and in two places he admits that it was a primitive principle of language. '*Non aliâ libertate, quam quâ illi primi homines rebus appellationes dederunt*' (viii. 3, 30); and '*et sunt plurima ita posita ab iis, qui sermonem primi fecerunt, aptantes affectibus vocem*' (viii. 6, 31).

<sup>2</sup> Bunsen, *Outlines*, ii. 135.

imitative harmony runs throughout them, and their very sounds bear the impress of the thoughts they breathe. Often this is due to the number of vigorous and appropriate imitations which they contain, as in Homer:—

‘ Par quel art le chantre d’Achille  
Me rend-il tant de bruits divers ?  
Il fait partir la flèche agile  
Et par ses sons sifflent les airs.  
Des vents me peint-il le ravage ?  
Du vaisseau que brise leur rage  
Éclate le gémissement ;  
Et de l’onde qui se courrouce  
Contre un rocher qui la repousse  
Retentit le mugissement. ’<sup>1</sup>

But often it results from a certain inward inexplicable harmony which makes sound the coefficient of sense,<sup>2</sup> and by virtue of which thoughts are often welded into an apparently indissoluble union with the language in which they are expressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Racine (le fils), *Ode sur l’Harmonie*.

<sup>2</sup> On the whole subject, which cannot here be pursued, see L. Quicherat, *Traité de Versification Française*, pp. 144–176. Pöbel, *Grundzüge einer Theorie des Reims*. The question of Assonances, Rhymes, Alliterations belongs to this part of our enquiry, but may safely be passed over. It is curious to find a powerful euphonic concord (a sort of Umlaut) running through the South African dialects. In Kafir, for instance, the adjective varies its prefix ten or twelve times, according to the prefix of the governing noun. Appleyard, *Kaf. Gram.* p. 6.

## CHAPTER XVI.

SUPPOSED ILLUSORINESS OF THE SEARCH FOR ONOMATO-  
PŒIAS.

‘ Alphana vient d’equus sans doute,  
 Mais il faut admettre aussi  
 Qu’en venant delà jusqu’ici  
 Il a bien changé sur la route ! ’

THE last objection we have found urged against the Onomatopoetic theory is—

5. The difficulty and illusoriness of the search.

If the search were ‘lawless,’ if it were ‘detrimental to all scientific etymology,’ the objection that it was also one in which we are peculiarly liable to be misled by the imagination might hold. But be it remembered that up to a certain point, and that point very far back in the history of the word, the search of the Sanskritist, and the search of those who hold the Imitative theory, would be *identical*. Without pledging ourselves to the *invariable* applicability of Grimm’s law, we should guide our enquiry by certain recognised rules of phonetic change, except in cases where there was good reason to admit that such rules are superseded by other more general and more potent influences. The only difference would be that we should carry our research rather farther back, and should hold in our hand a clue both simple and natural, which we believe to be sufficient to suggest many discoveries and explain many anomalies. Considering the *extreme* uncertainty of many etymologies confidently proposed by Sanskrit scholars, and the great improbability of the conclusions to which they often point, the

importance of some broad fundamental principle to guide the researches of etymology can hardly be overrated.

That there *is* an uncritical as well as a critical school of Etymology we do not of course deny; but we do deny that an acceptance of the Imitative theory at once stamps a man as belonging to the *uncritical* school. There is nothing whatever in the theory which supersedes the necessity of 'acting in subordination to the well-discovered principles and rules of phonology, so as not to swerve a foot's breadth from them unless plain actual exceptions shall justify it.' Etymologists of *every* school ought cordially to re-echo the wise and weighty words of Diez:<sup>1</sup> 'How little often can etymology accomplish! how doubtful are its results! The highest point reached by the etymologist is the consciousness of having acted scientifically. For the attainment of absolute certainty he has no security. Some insignificant new thing may hurl down from him under his feet a result previously gained with great labour. This will happen to him in every extended investigation; it is included among the daily experiences of the etymologist, from which even the most keen-eyed are not free. Therefore modesty! even when every fact seems to support our theories.' For a long time to come a large number of proposed derivations can only be regarded as plausible and tentative.

'I cannot help observing,' says Professor Pott in a private letter, which I am sure that he will forgive me for quoting, 'that the giving chase to onomatopoetical terms seems to me to be somewhat unfruitful, because of the numerous illusions to which such a study would be necessarily exposed.' Now caution is of course necessary; but we do not think that, in modern times at any rate, the charge of mere reckless guessing and fancying can be brought with more justice against philologists of this school than against those of any other school which may choose to monopolise the title of 'Scientific.' After the philological labours of men like Bopp, and

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<sup>1</sup> I quote the translation from Dwight's *Mod. Philology*, i. 238.



Grimm, and Pott, and Diez, and Curtius, and Max Müller, and of English scholars like Professor Key, the main laws of Etymology are too generally understood to render tolerable any defiance of them. Doubtless the ancient grammarians<sup>1</sup> furnish us with many amusing vagaries, and it would not be difficult to select scores of them from the 'Etymologicum Magnum;' but this was but natural, in days before Etymology existed, or could have existed, as a Science, nor is it in the least chargeable on their vague recognition of the onomatopoetic principle, but resulted from their unavoidable ignorance of every language except their own. This is quite enough to account for what De Quincey<sup>2</sup> calls, 'the unspeakable spirit of absurdity which came over both Greeks and Romans the moment they meddled with etymology.' But since philology *has* been a Science, can it be proved that onomatopœia has been a greater source of error than any other principle? Cannot etymological extravagance be illustrated *at least* as abundantly from the pages of Bopp and other eminent Sanskritists as from any who hold the views here supported? If a philologist like Benfey<sup>3</sup> could derive *βάκινθος* from *ῑ* = 'to bring forth,' and *ἄνθος* 'a blossom,' and if a scholar so eminent as the late Dr. Donaldson could connect *dulcis* 'sweet' with *δύλχος* 'long,' because fruit lengthens as it ripens—surely the scientific etymologists ought to see how liable they are to error, and ought to take care how they throw a slur upon the labours of those who after all only carry their views one step farther back. If I select no more instances to enforce the obvious advice that

<sup>1</sup> See Lersch, *Sprachphil. d. Alten*, iii. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Works, viii. p. viii. (Black's ed.)

<sup>3</sup> See Benfey, *Wurzel-lex.* i. 413. His error is exploded by Donaldson, *Cratylus*, p. 653. His derivation of *dulcis* I only learn by the report of a listener to one of his Cambridge lectures. Obviously *dulcis* is onomatopoetic in origin, no less than *γλυκύς* with which it is connected; both belong to the universal root *lk*, an imitation of *licking* the lips, &c. *Origin of Lang.* p. 84. For a very amusing exposition of several dogmatic vagaries in which learned philologists have indulged, see Professor Hewitt Key's pamphlet *Quæritur*, &c.

‘those who live in glass houses should not throw stones,’ it is because such a task, when one is engaged in trying to establish a reasonable theory, and not in exposing the errors of others, is both ungracious and irksome.

But fortunately Professor Müller offers us some illustrations of his assertion that if we look for the interjectional or imitative element in roots we become lawless and fanciful. Let us examine these, and see if there be any occasion to admit that they are erroneous and illusory. We do not think there is.

In both of his volumes (i. 354, ii. 92) he selects the etymologies proposed for the words *foul*, *filth*, *fiend*, &c. These words Mr. Wedgwood (*Etymological Dictionary*, i. p. xiii.) had derived, through various stages, from an ultimately interjectional root, the instinctive expression of disgust, *foh!* *fie!* *faugh!* This, argues Professor Müller in both his volumes, is impossible, and to accept it would be to undo the patient labour of years, and to throw back etymology into a condition of chaotic anarchy. ‘For *fiend* is the present participle of the Gothic *fijan* to hate; and as a Gothic aspirate always corresponds to a tenuis in Sanskrit, the same root in Sanskrit would at once lose its expressive power. It exists in fact in Sanskrit as *ṣīy* to hate, to destroy.’ He adds in his Second Series of Lectures, ‘Besides *ṣīy* to hate, there is another root in Sanskrit, *ṣūy* to decay. From it we have the Latin *pus*, *puteo*, *putridus*; Greek *ῥῥῶν*, and *ῥῥῥῶ*; Lithuanian *pulci* matter; and in strict accordance with Grimm’s law, Gothic *fuls*, English *foul*.’

Now surely the answer to these reiterated objections is absolute and triumphant. ‘He does not observe,’ says Mr. Wedgwood, ‘that the sound of breathing, and the interjection of disgust, are represented as often by the combination *pu* as by *fu*.’ This single short sentence is sufficient not only to crumble to the dust Professor Müller’s objection, but even to turn all his examples into so many additional illustrations of the interjectional element of language, from which it is quite clear that *ṣīy* to hate, and *ṣūy* to decay are

as much derived as are the Teutonic forms of similar words beginning with *f* or *ff*. For, in point of fact, *p* and *f* are frequently united in the same instinctive vocal-gesture of disgust, especially when it assumes its strongest form as in the Latin word *pfui*! That this is really the primitive element of these words we may conjecture as securely as that there was once a form *κμέλας*<sup>1</sup> when we compare the two forms *μέλας* and *κελαινός*. But what force is there then in this instance—selected and repeated by Professor Müller himself, and therefore one to which he evidently attaches great importance? In what way does it tend to refute the Interjectional theory? So far from overthrowing that theory, it tends directly to its support!

Another instance which he gives of the supposed illusoriness of onomatopœia is the word 'squirrel' (i. 350). But although every one who has ever heard squirrels rustling amid the whispering leaves of a grove, must feel a certain harmonious appropriateness in the sound, yet who has ever dreamed of urging it as an instance of *original* imitation? Certainly the 'some people' to whom he refers for the opinion must have been *tiros* of the most ignorant description, seeing that *sciurus* the shadow-tail is a word known to all schoolboys, even if they are not aware that our English word, like so many animal names in the Romance languages, comes from the diminutive *sciuriolus* (as *abeille* from *apicula*, *grenouille* from *ranuncula*, &c.). That squirrel *might*, however, have been very naturally expressed by an imitative sound is clear from the Persian *warwarah*, the Latin *viverra*, the modern Greek *βερβεριτζα*.

A third instance is *Katze*, cat. In my 'Origin of Language' I quoted it from Mr. Wedgwood as a probable onomatopœia, adding, 'It must however be admitted that

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<sup>1</sup> See Buttmann, *Lexil.* s. v. *κελαινός*. The form *κμέλεθρον* for *μέλαθρον* in the *Etym. Magn.* is an additional proof. Similarly the existence of *σύν* and *cum* would at once lead us to infer a form *ξύν* even if it were not found.

there is no sibilant in Kater.' This fact Mr. Müller adduces (i. 351) to explode the notion of its onomatopœian origin, and says that though the Sanskrit *mârjâra* sounds like purring, it really means the animal that cleans itself. Of 'cat' I have already spoken, and will only add that if *Katze* and *mârjâra* be not of imitative origin yet they are words which an imperious instinct — an instinct of which the workings are powerfully apparent in language — has at any rate forced into an imitative form; and if this unconscious instinct can work so powerfully in finished languages, we are the more necessitated to believe in its primary influence.

The only other case urged to show 'how apt we are to deceive ourselves when we once adopt this system of onomatopœia' is the word thunder, which likewise figures in both series of the *Lectures on Language* (i. 350, ii. 93). Now, although no philologist would select the particular words *tonitru*, *donner*, *tonnerre*, to illustrate the system of onomatopœia, because of their frequently asserted origin from the root *tan*, to stretch—for which reason I formally excluded the word both on a previous page, and in a previous<sup>1</sup> work—yet it is not a word on which we need object to accept the challenge of an opponent; and that for the two following reasons:—

(1.) It is known, and admitted, that if a list of names for the thunder<sup>2</sup> be collected from languages in every region of the globe, the imitative principle is, in the immensely preponderant number of instances, distinctly perceptible. This therefore proves that the most natural and simple mode of nomenclature for the phenomenon would be that of onomatopœia; and this again defends us from the charge of *fancifulness* when we assert that the form assumed by the word thunder (whatever its origin) is the result of the

<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> See the treatises of Grimm and Pott previously referred to, and add Adelung, *Mithridat.* i. xiv.; Renan, *De l'Origine du Lang.* p. 139.

onomatopoetic instinct—which is no other than an imperious sense of the *necessity* that in certain instances there should be a perceptible analogy between sound and sense.

But (2), even if we waive all discussion of the *certainty* of the etymology of *tonitru* from *tan*—what is *tan* itself? Mr. Wedgwood would class it with such words as to *din*, to *dun*, and other words expressive of continuous sound. Professor Müller replies that there are certain *laws* which change *tan* into *than*, and quite a different root *dhvan* into *dun*, and that these two roots preserve their individuality, and are and have been separate from the commencement. He says, indeed, ‘There may be, for all we know, some distant relationship between the two roots *tan* and *dhvan*, and that relationship *may have its origin in onomatopœia*.’ We believe that the history and meaning of many words derived from these two roots show this to be the case, and if so *our point is proved*. At present, however, we are only concerned with the root *tan* to stretch.

‘From <sup>1</sup> this root we have in Greek *tonos*, our *tone*, tone being produced by the stretching and vibrating of cords.’ It expresses ‘that tension of the air which gives rise to sound.’ Now we ask is it even *conceivable* that those fathers of our race who framed the Aryan language should have been so perversely eccentric, as, out of the *thousand* <sup>2</sup> possible relations which might have been selected as a characteristic, to choose the notion of *stretching* as a natural, obvious, or intelligible one, wherewith to express the thunder? Supposing, as we must do, that external objects and simple phenomena must have been among the earliest things to receive names, is it conceivable that a word for *stretching* should have been chosen as peculiarly applicable to the most terrible phenomenon of storms? Is it conceivable that at a period so very early in human history they should have noticed that ‘tension of the air which gives rise to sound,’ (?) and that too when they must have had at

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, i. 356, ii. 92.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Lang.* l. c.

hand a host of roots expressive of sound, any one of which would have suited better the object to be named? And if on the other hand they only selected the root *tan* because it was a root which they already possessed, and because it was well adapted to express the sound produced by *the vibration of cords*, why then, *tan* being an onomatopœia (cf. the very obvious cognate words *twang*, *τήνελλα*, &c., words which spontaneously present themselves as imitative of the sound produced by tremulous strings), *tonitru*, *tonnerre*, &c., are not only imitatively *moulded*, but are after all of an *origin* demonstrably onomatopœian even accepting all the premisses of our opponents. How then do they show the illusory nature of our search?

But here surely the *unsuitableness* of the particular onomatopœia ought at once to convince our common sense that our history of the word is incorrect. Could any human being have ever dreamed of perceiving any *analogy* between *thunder* and *harpstrings*! We may indeed imagine how

Wind that grand old harper smote  
His thunder-harp of pines;

and we can understand such a metaphor as

Now strike the golden lyre again,  
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!  
Break his hands of sleep asunder,  
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.

We can, I say, understand this because 'thunder' becomes very rapidly, as language advances, a word for *any loud noise*, and indeed a mere epithet or intensive prefix, as when we hear in low comedies of a person being a 'thundering brick!' But all these expressions belong to the mechanical or artificial stage of language, and it is, we repeat, inconceivable that the reason why the Sanskrit *tanyu*, thunder, should have been derived from *tan* to stretch, was because some old Aryan on hearing *thunder* was reminded of the resonance of tense strings. If indeed he were reminded of

any instrument at all, it would have been a wind instrument, as Homer was when he wrote

ἀμφὶ δ' ἐσάλλιγεν μέγας οὐρανός,  
The vast heaven *trumpeted* around ;

and as the Hebrews were when they confused the images of Sinaitic thunder with those of trumpets and archangelic voices (Ex. xix. 16, xx. 18, cf. 1 Thess. iv. 16, Rev. i. 10, &c.). But we may, I think, assume it as a certainty that 'thunder' was a phenomenon which received its name long before any musical instrument, either wind or string, was known.

The only way out of these difficulties and contradictions appears to be as follows. *If* it be accepted as certain that tonitru, &c., come ultimately from *tan*, and that the primitive conception of the root *tan* was that of 'stretching,' we must assume that some word like *τόνος* or *tone*, for the voice, was derived from or connected with it, not because the ancient Aryans knew anything about the *chordæ vocales*, but from the more general notion of stretching the throat in speaking and singing. The steps in the word's history will then be as follows: 1. *Tan* is an onomatopœia to express the sound made when a tightened string is twanged, and

In its clear vibration sings  
Like to the swallow's voice,<sup>1</sup>

2. This onomatopœia was transferred to the human voice, because the throat, during loud utterance, is obviously in a tense state. 3. The word 'voice' was naturally transferred to thunder, just as it was in Hebrew, where the word קוֹל Kōhl means *both voice and thunder*—the voice of the Lord (Ps. xxix., Ex. ix. 23, &c.). How natural is this analogy may be easily shown. In the Book of Job we read of 'the thunder of the captains.' In the narrative of the Evangelists,

<sup>1</sup> ἡ δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν δεισε χελιδὼν εἰκέλη αὐδὴν. Hom. *Od.* xxi.

when a voice came to our Lord from heaven, 'The people that stood by and heard it said that it *thundered*; others said, An angel *spake to him*.'<sup>1</sup> In modern literature the metaphor of thunder as applied to eloquence or poetry is one alike of the commonest and the most natural.

We are quite ready and indeed are very glad to admit, if need be, that 'the very same root *tan*, to stretch, yields some derivatives which are anything but rough and noisy,' such as tender, thin, &c., and we do not see at all that the relationship of these words would be hard to establish 'if the original conception of thunder' (i.e. of course the *word* thunder) 'had been its rumbling noise.' '*Thunder*,' as we have seen, unlike the words for the same thing in almost every other language, may be an onomatopœia not at *first* hand but at second hand, by one of those very processes of transference, analogy, and metaphor which we shall hope to illustrate in the next chapter; and, given the imitative basis, the fact that its linguistic superstructure should contain words so dissimilar in meaning from it as 'thin' and 'tender' is precisely what we should have expected, and precisely the fact which we shall subsequently urge as an additional proof that, given your seedlings of language in the form of a few imitative sounds, these sounds, when quickened by the intellect, possess a germinal force sufficient to make them burgeon into the noblest tree which ever 'bore aloft on its immortal boughs the language and the literature of a mighty nation.'

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<sup>1</sup> John xii. 29.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## REFLEX IMITATIVE TENDENCY OF LANGUAGE.

‘ Se consideriamo il ragguardevol numero di onomatopée sparsi in ogni lingua, e sopra tutto in quello che serbano ancora intatte le impronte della primitiva loro formazione, appare manifesta la naturale tendenza dell’ uomo a rappresentare gli oggetti per mezzo delle loro proprietà più distinte. ’—BIONDELLI, *Studii Linguistici*, p. 114.

IF it be meant as a reproach to the assertors of the imitative origin of language that their etymologies are ‘ fanciful,’ we have replied already that they are not one whit more so than those of the etymologists who arrogate to themselves the title of ‘ scientific.’ But, in point of fact, the name ‘ fanciful ’ carries with it no stigma at all, as we hope to prove further in the next chapter. ‘ The very nature of association in the human mind is essentially fanciful ;’ and if a fancy, the most playful and bizarre, can be shown to have preponderated in the growth of abstractions, it might be expected to play its part in the origin of roots. But we really are not aware exactly at what point of the enquiry the fancifulness is supposed to begin. For

(i.) Professor Müller admits freely that ‘ an *arbitrary* imposition of articulate sounds to signify definite ideas, is an assumption unsupported by any evidence ’ (ii. 338) ; and

(ii.) That ‘ all roots, i.e. all the material elements of language, are expressive of sensuous impressions, and sensuous impressions only.’

Here then again ‘ habemus confitentem.’ For, if all roots

were sensuous, and no root arbitrary, what follows? That every root must have been imposed, i.e. that every sound must have been chosen, for some *reason*. Now step by step we have shown that the easiest, and therefore the earliest, sounds must have corresponded to the earliest impressions; and there could have been no conceivable *reasons* for the earliest sounds except those which we have suggested. Are we then more 'fanciful' than those who accept the only possible alternatives, i.e. of considering that roots were 'inspired,' or of appealing to their supposed *occulta vis*? This much is certain:—Either the origin of Language was that which we have explained, and which even our opponents admit to be *possible*;—or the problem must be practically abandoned as inexplicable and insoluble, while at the same time it is treated of in a number of self-contradicting formulas.

The word '*sugar*' as well as *squirrel*, is adduced as an instance of the deceptiveness of fancy. 'Who does not imagine that he hears something sweet in the French *sucre*, *sucre*? Yet sugar came from India, and it is there called *s'arkhara*, which is anything but sweet-sounding.' True; but this remark has no connection whatever with the subject under our discussion. We do not even fancy that the word '*sugar*' has any particular sweetness in its sound. The theory of an imitative origin of language is wholly unconnected with the mysticism of the Analogists, whose views we shall discuss hereafter, and who, when the Science of Language was unknown, and few men could speak any but their mother-tongue, may be excused for having held the erroneous notion of an inevitable, inherent, and intrinsic harmony between word and thing. The connection between sound and sense, as we have said already, was not *arbitrary*; but neither was it miraculous. It must always have arisen from some determinate *reason*; and the only conceivable reason that can be suggested is the Imitative and Interjectional origin of roots. We did not know that any one had ever adduced '*sugar*' as an onomatopœia, though certainly

it would be a natural error to connect it with the imitative roots *sugere*, *suck*, &c.

Let us consider some similar cases. St. Augustine,<sup>1</sup> after stating the Stoic belief in the onomatopoetic theory, continues, that, in the case of things without life, a certain analogy was allowed to come into play, so that the softness or harshness of words was allowed to carry with it an impression of the softness or harshness of things. 'The very words "*lenis*" and "*asper*,"' he says, 'have a leniency and asperity in their sound. *Voluptas* "pleasure" is a soft, *crux* "cross" is a harsh word. So that words suggest their own meaning. *Mel* "honey" is as sweet to the ear as honey is to the taste; *acre* "sour"<sup>2</sup> is bitter to both; "*lana*" wool and "*vepres*" a bramble are rough to the ear, as the things they mean are to the touch. The Stoics considered a concord between sound and sense to be the very cradle of language.'

Doubtless there is in this passage much confusion of thought. In his statement about the invention of words capable of reproducing a natural sound, the Bishop reports the Stoics correctly; but the vast portion of language not capable of resulting from direct and immediate imitation was formed, not by the very crude and often purely imaginary analogy to which he refers, but by processes of derivation and composition which we have partly observed already, and which we shall consider further in following chapters. Yet after these deductions have been made, there is in the passage which we have quoted a residuum of truth. There is unquestionably a certain meaning, appropriateness, and symbolic power in sound.<sup>3</sup> It is certain that, as a rule, and independently of all confusion between a word and the

<sup>1</sup> *Dial. Princ.* c. 6. Quoted in that great storehouse of philological learning, Lersch, *Die Sprachphilosophie d. Alten*, iii. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Our 'eager' in its old sense, as 'eager milk,' the French 'aigre;' also sharp. 'It is a nipping and an eager air.' Shaksp. Cf. *πικρός*, which means both *pointed* and *bitter*.

<sup>3</sup> Pott, *Etym. Forsch.* ii. 261. He gives many instances.

inevitable associations which it summons up, things beautiful, soft, and pleasing, are *generally* represented by soft and pleasing words,<sup>1</sup> while things which are mean and repulsive receive mean and repulsive titles. This, however, is often the result of long-continued association modifying the existing forms of language. It is only another exhibition of that instinct which demands in almost every language the observance of certain euphonic concords, and which fills with subtle specimens of paronomasia and alliteration every great work of poetry from the Psalms of David and the precepts of Meng Tseu down to the last volume of Tennyson's poems. The sense of hearing works in harmony with the other senses, and assimilates itself to the conditions and emotions of the mind to which it conveys its impressions; it demands, for instance, that pleasurable sensations should be described in pleasurable sounds, just as it demands that the cadences of poetry should be soft and smooth when they glide along the waves of beauty and happiness, but grating and rough when they deal with objects of wrath and terror. The Cyclopes of Virgil toil at the anvil,—

Illi inter sese multâ vi brachia tollunt,

and his giants heap the hills, one on the crest of the other—

Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam,

in very different strains from those in which Camilla flies over the plain, or in which Ennius<sup>2</sup> makes his rapid cavalry rattle to the fight—

It eques, et plausu cava concutit ungula terram.<sup>3</sup>

And in Milton,

On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound

<sup>1</sup> See more on this subject with various instances in *Origin of Lang.* pp. 67-71.

<sup>2</sup> Ennius, *Ann.* xvii. ap. Macrob. *Sat.* vi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Compare also Virgil, *Æn.* XI, 845:  
*Quadrupedante putram cursu quatit ungula campum*

*The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus,*<sup>1</sup>

in far different sounds from those in which

Heaven open'd wide  
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,  
On golden hinges moving.<sup>2</sup>

There is then a sort of reflex action going on ;—there is a circular motion in language, by which words start from an imitation, and then losing in the course of ages their imitative force are remoulded on the old natural principle by a certain imperious demand for an open congruity between sound and sense whenever it is at all possible or permissible. We have already seen this principle at work in the words *katze* and *thunder* ; and to these we may add the Romance words for nightingale, Italian *rossignuolo*, Spanish *ruyseñor*, French *rossignol*, which are merely modifications of *lusciniola*, a diminutive from *luscus*, meaning the bird that

Sings *darkling*, and in shadiest covert hid  
Tunes her nocturnal note,

and which yet are evidently meant to snatch an echo of onomatopoetic music. One might select many such instances, but every one can find them with ease. Who would not fancy that he heard something of the *kanonengebrüll* in the word cannon ? Yet it merely comes from *canna*, a reed. *Clarion*, for all its sonorous fulness, is from *clarus*, and means the *clearly*-sounding instrument ; *minstrel*, liquid and musical, is nothing but a corruption of the vulgar *ministerialis* ; and *lute*, with all its vowel-sweetness, is nothing but the Arabic article *el* kneaded up into the substantive *ud*, as in alchemy or algebra, or, to take an instance from our own language, as the *n* of our indefinite article gets tacked on to *eft* in the word *newt*. Thus it is that language reverts to its

<sup>1</sup> *Par. Lost*, ii. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vii. 204.

primary instincts. Its earliest sounds were imitative, and after long deviations from their primitive source, after being subjected to a thousand varying influences, they yet tend to become imitative again. Carried far away from its primitive source, subjected to numberless modifications, its words still, if I may be forgiven the metaphor, are like those

Sinuous shells of pearly hue  
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed  
In the sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked  
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave :  
Shake one and it awakens ; then apply  
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,  
*And it remembers its august abodes,*  
*And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Landor. By a curious coincidence the same lines have been quoted to illustrate the same point by the 'Times' since these pages were written.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PART PLAYED BY THE IMAGINATION IN THE  
INVENTION OF LANGUAGE.

‘What surmounts the reach  
Of human sense, I shall delineate so,  
By likening spiritual to corporal forms,  
As may express them best.’

MILTON, *Par. Lost*, v. 7.

IN one of those pregnant concessions to the importance of the Imitative principle which make us sometimes hope that our eminent opponent is more than half convinced by the arguments adduced in its favour, after allowing that there is ‘a large stock’ of onomatopœias in every language, he says, ‘And who would deny that some words originally expressive of sound only, might be transferred to other things which have some analogy with sound?’

‘But,’ he continues (ii. 89), ‘how are all things which do not appeal to the sense of hearing—how are the ideas of going, moving, standing, sinking, tasting, thinking, to be expressed?’

This is the last arrow, and meant apparently to be the most effective, which is shot Parthian-like into our forces. The point of it has already been turned aside by the considerations previously adduced. But in order to leave no argument unconsidered, I hope throughout this chapter to bring an abundance of instances which will be adequate to remove the suggested difficulty, or at any rate to show that it is neither fatal nor final.

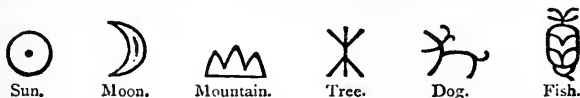
Let us return for a moment to first principles.

I have said repeatedly that *no* school of etymologists pretends to explain the derivation of *all* words. The Imitative school indeed is the only one which offers *any* explanation of the ultimate origin of even a *large* number of words. We are not therefore in a *worse* position than any others, although we are convinced that the Science of Philology can go farther and attempt more than has yet been accomplished. Consequently it is no refutation of our principles to adduce any special group of words which we are unable to explain, any more than it would be a refutation of the arguments of Bopp, or Grimm, or Pott, to perform the easy task of assembling long lists of words in the Aryan languages of which they could give, and could pretend to give, no account whatever. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the linguistic processes which we shall illustrate in the next chapter are sufficient to account for the possible expression of *any* conceptions whatever; and with this we might perhaps rest content. Given the segment of a circle however small, and the whole circle can immediately be reproduced; given a distinct and decisive clue to the processes of language, and no serious difficulty remains in effecting its complete reconstruction. Of the group of words and conceptions which Professor Müller proposes as incapable of explanation on our principles, we shall have something to say before we enter on the more general enquiry. The riddle which he proposes is after all a riddle which is easily solved by the same clues which enable us to understand how modifications of the voice could effect the far more difficult result of expressing or describing the images which fall on the retina of the eye. Meanwhile, as an illustration is often more clear and convincing than many arguments, let me once more recur to the progress of writing to illustrate my position, —which it does in a very remarkable manner. I have already adduced the Hebrew alphabet to show the analogy between the imitative origin of writing and of speech; I now adduce the Chinese ideography to illustrate how ele-



mental roots were extended into finished and all-expressive language.

The Chinese writing is ideographic, i.e. it has no alphabetic letters, but signs, each of which stands for a conception. The most ancient Chinese characters (like our astronomical and chemical symbols) were *rude pictures of material objects*, just as we believe the earliest words to have been rude imitations of sounds chosen as the most obvious and self-explaining characteristics of such objects as admitted of such representations. These characters were about 200 in number, and are called *Sfang-hing* or Images, as—



We see that the picture was conventional or ideal rather than an actual copy. For instance, in the character for fish we see the scales and the tail conventionalised, or represented according to an accepted symbolism, as is the case with the roots and boughs of the tree; and as again, in language, mere imitations are ideally and articulately modified.

But soon arose the need for representing more complicated objects; and, for these, *new signs were not invented*, but the old ones were combined by the most ingenious combinations and the liveliest metaphors, just as imitative roots were transferred, agglutinated, compounded, or inflected, to express intellectual operations, and various conditions incapable of being externally perceived. Thus, for instance, to signify *light* we have the sun and moon; for *hermit* we have a man over a mountain; for *singing*, a mouth and a bird; for *wife*, a woman, a hand, and a broom; for *hearing*, an ear placed at a door; for *tears*, an eye and water, &c., as follows:—




To express abstract ideas, or acts of the understanding, use is made of analogies and metaphors suggested by the simple characters ; for instance, a *heart* represents the soul ; a *house* stands for man ; a *broom* for woman ; a *hand* for artisan ; three men, one behind the other, means 'to follow,' &c. The notions<sup>1</sup> of *roughness*, *rotundity*, *motion*, *rest*, were represented by a mountain, the sky, a river, the earth ; the sun, moon, and stars stood for *smoothness*, *splendour*, anything artfully wrought or delicately worked ; *extension*, *growth*, *increase*, were figured by clouds, the firmament, and vegetables ; *motion*, *agility*, *slowness*, *idleness*, and *diligence*, by various insects, birds, fish, and quadrupeds. 'In this manner passions and sentiments were traced by the pencil, and ideas not subject to any sense were exhibited to the sight, until by degrees new combinations were invented, new expressions added ; the characters dwindled imperceptibly from their primitive shape, and the Chinese language became not only clear and forcible, but rich and elegant in the highest degree.'<sup>2</sup> These characters are called *kia-tsiei*, or *borrowed*.


No more vivid notion than this could be given of the exactly analogous processes of language ; but we have not yet done with our illustration.

For these characters, idealised as they are, do not, in the more modern systems of writing, retain more than

<sup>1</sup> So too with objects which would have been too difficult to represent in this manner, the mixed characters *hing-ching* are used,

which are half representative and half syllabic. Thus the sign ,

'place' (li in Chinese), joined to a fish, means the fish li or carp ; and the word *pe*, white, is only pronounced in the character composed of a




tree, , *pe*, which means cypress.

<sup>2</sup> Sir W. Jones, *Asiatic Researches*, ii. 195. He refers to the Chinese writer Li Yan Ping.

a dim and vague resemblance to the original picture, as follows :—

	sun, becomes	月
	moon, becomes	日
	mountain, becomes	山
	tree, becomes	木
	dog, becomes	犬
	fish, becomes	魚

And to take one or two compound signs :—

	bird and mouth = song, becomes	鳴
	ear and door = hearing, becomes	聞
	tree 檉, or cypress, becomes	柏

Now if all this were not a matter of historic certainty, only imagine how 'fanciful' a person would be called who should assert that the cursive sign stood for the object! How completely, for instance, in the above-written characters does the dog lose his head and legs! What a ghostly simulacrum is left him of his curly tail! The ear at the door looks more like three flags, and the moon assumes the resemblance of an eccentric ladder. Nevertheless, that eccentric ladder sprang by direct filiation from a very passable crescent moon, and the hatchet of the first compound sign was once a very sweet little mouth with a Cupid's bow for the upper lip! So much then for the reproach of

'fancifulness' in enquiries of this kind. For if written characters are liable to these Protean metamorphoses, how much rather should we expect them in the words spoken every day, and subject to all the changes likely to arise from their utterance millions of times by millions of mouths in millions of different vocal modifications?

But now suppose that the Sîang-hîng or original image-characters had been lost, and some ingenious theorist, by the aid of an intelligent observation and analysis of the 11 or modern system of writing, had conjectured its originally pictorial intention; and if he succeeded in *proving* that, say a thousand out of some 30,000 recognised signs had this origin, would he not be fairly entitled to conclude—there being in his procedure no intrinsic unlikelihood, but on the contrary an *à priori* probability—that the rest, which he was unable to explain, were similarly developed from rude imitations? Would the charge of uncertainty in some instances, or the charge of degrading the divine dignity of the invention, be a disproof of his position? Would it be fair to produce a group of indecomposable signs, and flout him with failure if he could give no account of them? Would it be philosophical to provide his critic with a nickname, and call his system the 'scrap-book' or the 'baby-scrawl' theory? Well then we say to each of our opponents, 'mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur!' The rule of Varro<sup>1</sup> is more equitable, viz., that he who has given many excellent derivations ought rather to be thanked for those than blamed for an occasional failure; particularly when he admits that for many words no etymology whatever can be offered.

And here we must again stop to object decidedly against the notion, common apparently to most philologists, that *verbal* roots, such as going, moving, tasting, &c., or as some

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<sup>1</sup> 'Igitur de originibus verborum qui multa dixerit commode, potius boni consulendum, quam qui aliquid nequiverit reprehendendum; praesertim quum dicat etymologice non omnium verborum dici posse causam.' Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* vii. 4.

prefer to call them, *predicative* roots, were the earliest. To us such a conception is logically inconceivable. The invention of a verb requires a greater effort of abstraction than that of a noun, for, obviously, we must have generalised from individual phenomena before we can express them verbally under the conditions of 'motion, action, or existence.' In some places, indeed, Professor Müller<sup>1</sup> appears to hold the correct view, that at first 'roots' stood for any and every part of speech, just as the monosyllabic expressions of children do, and just as they do to this day in that language of arrested development, the Chinese. Similarly 'parts of speech' have little or no existence in the gesture-language of deaf mutes. This is the view supported with such brilliant acumen, and illustrated with so much philological learning, by the late Mr. Garnett<sup>2</sup> in his *Essay on the Nature and Analysis of the Verb*. We believe with him that all language is reducible to roots which are either the basis of abstract nouns, or are pronouns denoting relations of place, which latter we believe to have arisen from interjectional elements. Now, 'a verb is not a simple, but *ex necessario*, a complex term, and therefore no primary part of speech.'<sup>3</sup> From these views we cannot accept it as even *possible* that, 'from roots meaning to shine, to be bright, names were formed, for sun, moon, stars, the eyes of man, gold, silver, play, joy, happiness, love. With roots meaning to strike, it was possible to name an axe, the thunderbolt, a fist, a paralytic stroke, a striking remark, and a stroke of business.' It seems inconceivable that men should have needed, and, therefore, should have invented, a word meaning 'to shine' before they had any designation for the sun, or a verb meaning 'to strike' before they had the

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<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, ii. 86. Bunsen, *Outlines*, ii. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *The Philol. Essays of the late Rev. Rich. Garnett*, edited by his Son, pp. 289-342. No more sound, or valuable, or interesting contribution to Philology has appeared for many years than this volume of Essays.

<sup>3</sup> Garnett, p. 290.

imitative sounds *tud*, *tup*, *tuph* (cf. our confessed onomatopœias *thud*, *tap*, *tat*, *rub a dub*, &c.),<sup>1</sup> which were amply sufficient for a host of derivatives in every language, as *τύπτω*, *τύμπαλον*, *drub*, *drum*, *thump*, and so forth. We have already seen that the verb is represented by a combination of the noun in the history of Chinese ideography, and it seems to me impossible that it could have been otherwise in speech. In Chinese *ming* 明 'bright' is<sup>2</sup> from 月 *yih* the sun, and 日 *ngyněh* the moon; and 分 *fwun* 'to divide' is composed of 刀 *tao* a knife, and 八 *pāh* eight.

This is a conceivable process; the other would be, in the old sense of the word, preposterous. Nor is it a question as to what is merely *probable* in language; for we may regard it as established by the large inductive process of Mr. Garnett, and many others, that 'the radical terms employed to denote action, passion, or state, had originally rather the force of nouns than verbs,' and this especially in the Celtic, which, it need hardly be remarked, is one of the very oldest members of the Aryan family. If so, we must entirely give up the notion that the names of objects came from predicative or verbal roots. We hope, too, that the instance of the root *tup* and the origin assigned to it, will show our reason for not attaching any importance to the whole division of roots into primary and secondary, which is elaborated in Professor Müller's first series of Lectures (p. 250).

It requires but the feeblest power of abstraction—a power possessed even by idiots—to use a name as the sign of a conception, e.g. to say 'sun;'—to say 'sheen,' as the description of a phenomenon common to all shining objects, is a higher effort, and to say 'to shine' as expressive of the state or act is higher still. Now, familiar as such efforts

<sup>1</sup> So obvious is this imitation as to be found also in the Semitic languages. Cf. Hebr. תַּפַּח, תַּפַּח, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Marshman, *Chinese Gram.* p. 23.

may be to us, there is ample proof that they could not have been so to the inventors of language, because they are not so, even now, to some nations of mankind after all their long millenniums of existence. Instances of this fact have been repeatedly adduced. Even in the *Mithridates*<sup>1</sup> we find it noticed that the Society Islanders have words for dog's tail, bird's tail, and sheep's tail, yet no word for tail; that the Mohicans have verbs for every kind of cutting, and yet no verb 'to cut,' and forms for 'I love him,' 'I love you,' &c., but no verb meaning 'I love.' The Choctaws<sup>2</sup> have names for every possible species of oak, but no word for the genus oak. The Australians<sup>3</sup> have no *generic* word for fish, bird, or tree; and the Eskimo, though he has verbs for seal-fishing, whale-fishing, and every other kind of fishing, has no verb meaning simply 'to fish.' 'Ces langues,' says Du Ponceau, in his admirable Essay, '*généralisent rarement.*' Thus, they have separate verbs for 'I wish to eat meat,' and 'I wish to eat soup,' but no verb for 'I wish;'<sup>4</sup> and separate words for a blow with a sharp, and a blow with a blunt instrument, but no abstract word for blow. Mr. Crawford<sup>5</sup> bears similar witness to the Malay languages. 'The Malay,' he says, '*is very deficient in abstract words*; and the usual train of ideas of the people who speak it does not lead them to make a frequent use even of the few they possess. They have copious words for colours, yet borrow the word colour, *warna*, from the Sanskrit. With this poverty of the abstract is united a redundancy of the concrete. No word for tree or herb, yet *urat*, fibre; *akar*, root; *pârdû*, tree-crown; *tangkai*, stalk; *battan*, stock; *tungal*, trunk; *dâan* and *turuk*, twig; *tukut*, *tunas*, and *gagang*, shoot, &c.'

<sup>1</sup> Adelung, *Mithr.* iii. 325, 397. See, too, Pott, *Etym. Forsch.* ii. 167. Heyse, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Latham, *Races of Man*, p. 376.

<sup>3</sup> De Quatrefages, *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, Dec. 15, 1860. Maury, *La Terre et l'Homme*, p. 433.

<sup>4</sup> Du Ponceau, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Crawford, *Malay Grammar*, i. 68 seq.

He gives many similar instances, and an analogous one is to be found even in Anglo-Saxon, which had abundant words for all shades of blue, red, green, yellow, &c., but borrowed <sup>1</sup> from the Latin the abstract word 'colour';—and abundant names for every form of crime, before it borrowed from Latin the abstract words 'crime' and 'transgression.' With instances like these before us—and they might be indefinitely multiplied—who shall believe that the sun, and moon, and earth, had not been named at all until they received names from roots meaning to shine, to measure, and to plough? or that cows and reptiles, and creeping plants, and flowing water, and clouds, made shift with being anonymous until after men possessed an indefinite number of verbs all meaning 'to go'? <sup>2</sup>

And now then, having cleared the way by these preliminary considerations, let us (though we might, as we have shown, fairly decline to accept any one particular test) very briefly consider whether there is no answer, on our principles, to the question, 'How are all things which do not appeal to the sense of hearing—how are the ideas of going, moving, standing, sinking, tasting, thinking to be expressed?' It would be tedious to go through them all; let us then take each alternate word. If the question can be answered for these, it can be as easily answered for the rest. Let it be observed that in attempting to answer it at all we are doing something *beside and beyond* what our opponents ever attempt to do; we are rising above 'that indolent philosophy which refers to a miracle whatever it is unable to explain.'

'Ideas<sup>3</sup> of going.' I am not aware that anybody has

<sup>1</sup> Dr. D. Wilson, *Prehistoric Man*, i. 61.

<sup>2</sup> See Prof. Key, *ubi sup.*, 8-16.

<sup>3</sup> I must remark, *en passant*, that I am not responsible for this use of the word 'ideas'; though, indeed, it is hopeless to redeem this noble word from the mass of confused usages into which it has fallen. Not one modern writer in twenty thousand uses it either carefully or accurately in its only true and proper meaning.



attempted to explain the origin of the Sanskrit verb 'ga,' to go. Of other Sanskrit verbs with this meaning<sup>1</sup> there is at least a reasonable probability that 'pat' (also to fall) and *sr*, and *srp* (also to creep), are of imitative origin, as they are closely analogous to many formations of similar meaning which are confessedly so. Moreover, to confine ourselves to our own language alone, what shall we say of the words creep, crawl, dawdle, dance,<sup>2</sup> rush, hurry, patter, totter, stump, stamp, and many more, to say nothing of such as expressly imply noise combined with motion, as whizz, whirr, hurl, &c. ? Every one of these is an 'idea of going ;' every one of these is — and the proof is easy — onomatopoeically expressed.

'Ideas of standing.'<sup>3</sup> It would have been difficult, perhaps, to choose any conceptions so apparently incapable of mimetic or interjectional expression as these ; yet their origin can be explained. It has long been noticed that combinations of *s* and *t* have been chosen in many languages as expressions of stability, ἵστημι, *sto*, *setzen*, *sitzen*, *stemmen*, &c. There must have been some reason for this, and we believe it to be furnished by the simple instinctive *Lautgeberde* st ! a sound peculiarly well adapted to demand attention (compare whist ! usht ! &c.), and therefore well adapted to express stopping and standing as the immediate results of an awakened attention. Even Heyse was struck with the fact that the *Lautgeberde* offers a close analogy to the imperative sentence, and that st ! was equivalent to the command sta !<sup>4</sup> stop !

<sup>1</sup> As for the root 'i' 'go' in ἵεναι, &c., Plato says, τῷ δ' αὖ ἰῶτα πρὸς τὰ λεπτά πάντα, ἃ δὴ μάλιστα διὰ πάντων ἰοὶ ἄν. In other words *i*, as the subtlest of the vowels, is chosen, by a sort of imitative analogy, to express notions of movement, penetration, &c. *Crat.* p. 426. I leave this as I find it.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hebr. יָצַח, *tanzen*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, whether in irony or earnest, derives στάσις from ἄ λείσις (not going) with an euphonic epenthesis st ! (ἡ δὲ στάσις ἀπόφασις τοῦ ἵεναι βούλεται εἶναι, διὰ δὲ τὸν καλλωπισμὸν στάσις ὠνόμασται. *Cratylus*, p. 426.)

<sup>4</sup> *System*, p. 73.

‘Ideas of tasting.’ An unfortunate selection to prove the difficulty of extending imitative words, because we believe that the word *taste* itself, together with nearly all its synonyms and words which express similar meanings, are very easy onomatopœias. Taste, for instance (Ital. *tastare*, Germ. *tasten*, &c.), is from *taxitare*, a frequentative of *taxare*, a verb defined by Aulus Gellius to mean ‘pressius crebriusque tangere.’ Now *tax* is an open and unconcealed imitation, as ‘*Tax, tax*, tergo meo erit,’ in Plautus.<sup>1</sup> And as for the difficulty or impossibility of similarly expressing other ideas of tasting, what does Professor Müller say to the words לִיץ; Arabic *lalūka*; Sanskrit, *lih*, *lak*; λείχω, *lingo*, *ligurio*? or the words *trinken*, drink, quaff, *saufen*, *souper*, sup, soup, quaff? or to *sugere*, *succus*, *saugen*, suck? or to *schmecken* and smack? or to gurgle, gulp, gobble, guzzle, &c.? or to hundreds more whose origin may be less transparent, but is hardly less certain? Are these ‘ideas of tasting’ or are they not? are they onomatopœias or not? The answer to either question can hardly be doubtful.

I think, therefore, that on this point also the challenge has been most fairly accepted, and fairly met; for it would be no less easy to go through the ‘ideas of moving, sinking, and thinking.’ And here for the present I may leave the controversy.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pers.* ii 3. 12.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## METAPHOR.

Περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων ἀπὸ τῶν φαινομένων χρή σημειοῦσθαι. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐπινοοῖαι πᾶσαι ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθήσεων γεγόνασιν κατὰ τε περίπτωσιν καὶ ἀναλογίαν καὶ ὁμοιότητα καὶ σύνθεσιν συμβαλλομένου τι καὶ λογισμοῦ.

EPIC. ap. Diog. Laert. x. 32.

BARON BUNSEN, in one of those eloquent and magnificent bursts of dogmatism which are to be found in his noble book, *The Philosophy of Universal History*, after describing the Imitative theory in a manner which at any rate does not apply to any of its present holders, and which is based on complete misapprehension of their views, says that such a theory is not only disproved by all history and diametrically opposed by facts (!), but is '*a most absurd supposition in itself, as most objects have no sound whatever.*'<sup>1</sup>

If the former pages of this volume have not satisfied the reader as to the utter groundlessness of the first assertions, it is hardly worth while to argue further; and I trust that he will have already seen enough to show that the last assertion is none the less erroneous for sounding at first mention plausible. If not, the following chapter will show that as an objection to our theory it has *no weight whatever*. Indeed, as we have several times observed, it is not true, to begin with, that 'most objects have no sound whatever.' Even the mass of objects in the dumb and inanimate world are so constituted that the sound produced by them is generally the best and truest indication of their character and proper-

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<sup>1</sup> Bunsen, ii. 131.

ties. The clang of various metals, from the deep reverberations of iron to the tremulous shiver of thin steel, and the sharp tinkling of brass and tin—the whisper and splash of cohesionless liquids—the crackle, and blare, and roar of flame—the ringing resonance of stone and marble—the creaking of green boughs—the ripping of dead wood—the clink of glass—the dull thud of soft and yielding bodies—the discontinuous rattle of hard, dry substances—the flap or rustle of woven fabrics in the wind—every one of these sounds, and of thousands more, betrays instantaneously to the ear the nature of every substance, and is recognisable even from a distance and in the dark. And every one of these sounds is capable of articulate representation. It is not too much to say that there is hardly an inanimate substance in the creation which does not in some way or other connect itself with sound—that does not in some way or other recall an acoustic image of itself.

We have observed the influence exercised over language by the emotions (*interjections*), by the will (*Lautgeberden*), and the deep-lying instinct of imitation (onomatopœia); it remains to see how the materials thus provided were moulded and multiplied by the imagination and the fancy.

At first sight there might have appeared to be a difficulty absolutely insuperable in making audible sounds the exponents of impressions which come to us through the gateways of four most different senses—in translating for the ear the perceptions which we form through the medium of touch, and taste, and smell, and sight; in giving expression—by means of the undulations of air sent pulsing upon the tympanum by vibrations of the vocal chords, and motions of the lips and tongue—to all that pleases or disgusts in contacts, and savours, and odours, and in the infinite many-coloured world of visual images. Yet over this seemingly fathomless abyss of separation, Nature flings in one wide arch, and without an effort, her marvellous aerial bridge!

The difficulty is at once enormously reduced by observing that nothing corresponding to the impressions of the senses

has any objective or actual existence. There is no such thing in the abstract as a smell, a taste, or a colour. There is nothing in any way analogous to these words beyond the boundary-line of our own individualities. Infinitely small particles floating invisibly in the air rest on the fibro-mucous membrane which lines the nasal cavity, and by mechanical or chemical combinations affect the olfactory filaments, and we say that there is a smell; movements of air undulating on the tympanum are conveyed to the auditory nerve, and modified by the exquisite and dimly-understood mechanism of the cochlea, otolithes, and semicircular passages, and we say there is a sound; rays of light falling on the cornea, and variously refracted by the crystalline and vitreous humours, produce an inverted image of objects upon the network of optic nerves, and we say that we see; the delicate surface of the skin, conveying the impression of resistance under various forms, leads us to say of an object when we touch it that it is hard, or round, or square; and other impressions are conveyed by the tongue or palate which we say are sweet or acid. But what are the objective realities corresponding to the words 'a smell,' 'a colour,' 'a sound,' 'roundness,' 'sweetness'? There *are* no such objective realities, they are pure nonentities. The words are absolutely meaningless, except so far as they express the modifications, however produced, of one and the same sentient subject. Even substance is but a purely hypothetical postulated residuum after the abstraction of all observable qualities. Nothing has any existence for us except as a *synthesis* of attributes, and even these attributes are not inherent in matter, but are merely affections of our personality which we project into the external world, and endow with a purely imaginary objectivity; they are but shadows of the inward microcosm flung by the light of our own life upon the external universe, and invested by imagination with an independent reality.

When therefore we express by words the impressions of every sense, we are not translating from a number of lan-

guages which have no analogy with each other, but we are merely expressing a single subject—namely, ourselves. We are dealing, not with external realities, but with subjective sensations. The impressions, however various may be the sources whence they are derived, all act upon a *sensorium commune*; <sup>1</sup> however diverse may be our sensations, they are all of them nothing more than material changes in one common brain. In point of fact, we have not five senses, but only one sense, the sense of feeling. There may be no connection between a sound and a colour; but since both the sound and the colour are but states produced in a thinking subject, the brain which is affected by the sound can *use* sound as a means of expressing the effect of the colour also. A smell, the striking of a clock, muscular resistance, and the form of a triangle, are separated from each other by an abyss of difference; there is nothing in common even between different sensations received by the same organ—as white and black. Language expresses nothing but the *relations* of things, and as these are *purely subjective*, the mind which creates these supposed relations is also capable of expressing them.

Hence, by an apparently instinctive process—a process, at any rate, not derived either from logical inference or physical research—we find throughout all language an interchange between, rather than a confusion of, the words which properly belong to different senses. This is especially the case in the terms expressive of light and sound. We find nothing to alter in such verses as ‘All the people *saw* the thunderings and lightnings, and the *noise* of the trumpet’ (Ez. xx. 18), or ‘I turned to *see* the *voice* which spake with me’ (Rev. i. 12). In Æschylus, ‘The voice <sup>2</sup> and the clash

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Wie hängt Gesicht und Gehör, Farbe und Wort, Duft und Ton zusammen? . . . Wir sind ein denkendes *sensorium commune* nur von verschiedenen Seiten berührt—Da liegt die Erklärung.’ Herder, s. 94. By the name *sensorium commune*, however, I do not mean merely the brain, but the brain, the nerves, the organs of sense, &c. See Bain, *The Senses and Intellect*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Boyes, *Illustrations to Æschylus*, &c., p. lii.

are seen (*Prom. Vinct.* 21, 22); in Sophocles the pæan flashes (*Æd. Tyr.* 187), and the echo gleams back from the distant rock (*Æd. Col.* 137): by the voice the blind beholds, the ears of the deaf are sightless.'

All the effects produced by the senses are indeed but different threads which Nature has woven into one web; but between light and sound, the two most infinite in their revelations of the outer world, there seems to be a distinct and peculiar connection. 'They are,' says Lamennais,<sup>1</sup> merely 'two different organs of the same faculty, two different manifestations of the *same* sense.' Hence, the Greek Apollo is the god both of melody and of brightness.

The imaginative power to perceive these analogies works instinctively and without reflection; the mere copy or imitation of a sound is, by a new step in the progress of language—which is due to the imagination—elevated into a symbol for things which it cannot directly imitate, and finally, this symbol is promoted by the understanding into a general sign; but each step is taken naturally and unconsciously. Nothing is more common in ordinary language than to hear people adopt these self-explaining and vivid analogies.<sup>2</sup> We speak indifferently of a clear tone or a clear light; and the word '*tone*' itself is applied to a picture no less than to a harmony. No one is struck with a sense of incongruity when we speak of a *gamut of colours*, or a *chromatic sequence* in a piece of music. Sophocles speaks of a man as '*blind* both in *ears* and *eyes*.'<sup>3</sup> Who does not see the beauty of this sentence in a modern writer? 'And as the chorus swelled and swelled till the air seemed made of sound, *little flames*, vibrating too, as if the sound had caught fire, burst out between the turrets of the palace and the girdling towers.

<sup>1</sup> *Esquisse d'une Philosophie*, in E. Arnould's *Ess. d'Hist. Lit.* p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> I gave some striking instances from the poets in the *Origin of Lang.* p. 126. In French there are several which are hardly admissible in English, as '*sombres gémissements*,' '*lueurs éclatantes*,' &c.

<sup>3</sup> τυφλὸς τὰ τ' ὤτα τὸν τε νοῦν τὰ τ' ὄμματ' εἶ. *Æd. Tyr.* 371.

That *sudden clang, that leaping light*, fell on Romola like sharp wounds.’<sup>1</sup> ‘Is not the delight of the quavering upon a stop of music,’ says Lord Bacon, ‘the same with the playing of light upon the water’<sup>2</sup>—

Splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus ?

Are not the organs of the senses of one kind with the organs of reflection—the eye with a glass, the ear with a cave or strait determined and bounded? *Neither are these only similitudes, as men of narrow observation may conceive them to be*, but the same footsteps of nature, treading or printing upon several subjects or matters.’<sup>3</sup> Hence it is that, by a purely unconscious sense of analogy, we find repetitions of light expressed by precisely the same kind of reduplication as repetitions of sound; so that *purpura* and *marmor* indicate waves of light no less naturally than *murmuro* and *susurro* indicate waves of sound.<sup>4</sup> Quick motions, also producing a sort of flash in the air, are represented by imitative reduplications, as *papilio*, the butterfly, which in Basque is *chickitola*, and in Botocudo is *kiaku-keck-keck*.

Nor is this interchange of the terms proper in different senses at all confined to the eye and the ear. ‘Ye have made our *odour* to be abhorred in the *eyes* of Pharaoh,’ we

<sup>1</sup> *Romola*, ii. 85. There is a direct etymological connection between *fragor* and *bright*; between *φῶς*, ‘light,’ and *φημι*, ‘I say.’ Vide Heyse, s. 115. A writer whom I have previously quoted says, ‘We can readily imagine the imitative *tinkle* passing into the French *étincelle* and the English *twinkle*—the sharp delicate impression on the ear recalling that upon the eye.’ *Macmillan’s Mag.*

<sup>2</sup> Compare ‘It is like listening to the mysterious music in the conch sea-shell; it is like watching the fleeting rays of light which shoot up to heaven as we are looking at the sunset.’ Robertson, *Addresses*, p. 227. Every one knows how Sanderson, born blind, compared ‘red’ to a trumpet-note; the reverse story of Massieu, the deaf-mute, comparing a trumpet-note to the same colour, is not so generally known.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. of Learning*, bk. i.

<sup>4</sup> Dwight, *Mod. Philology*, 2nd Series, p. 210.



find in Ex. v. 21; and 'truly the *light* is *sweet*,' in Eccl. xii. 7. Dr. Kalisch correctly observes that what such expressions lose in logical accuracy they gain in richness and force; and hence we find them frequently in the poets, as in Æschylus, *κῦπον δέδορκα*, 'I see a sound,' and in Lucretius, '*loca vidi reddere voces*.' Crashaw talks of 'the murmur of a *sparkling noise*;' Akenside of '*tasting the fragrance of a rose*;' Byron of '*inhaling an ambrosial aspect*.' The adjectives *soft*, *sharp*, *hard*, *mild*, *rough*, *smooth*, are used indifferently of sounds, of lights, of touch, of taste; <sup>1</sup> the adjective *nice*, which belongs properly to the region of taste alone, is on the lips of some people an epithet of universal meaning; and other adjectives, not properly belonging to the domain of any sense, are transferred indiscriminately to each sense, so that, for instance, we are not surprised to hear of a rich colour,<sup>2</sup> a rich tone, or rich viands; of delicate tints, delicate odours, or delicate textures. To such an extent is this carried that we hardly notice it in ordinary conversation, nor are we struck by anything metaphorical in the turn of expression when we hear a person speaking colloquially of a glorious day or a glorious concert; of bitter cold, bitter experience, or a bitter taste; of a sweet smell, a sweet voice, a sweet taste, a sweet look, or a sweet feeling.

We see then that there is no difficulty in expressing anything with which all the senses are conversant in terms derived from the instinctive or imitated sounds furnished to us by one of them; and thus we are at once supplied with a nomenclature sufficiently ample for all the phenomena of the material universe. At every step in this part of the progress of language, the imagination is dominant. From this source

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<sup>1</sup> The whole subject is admirably treated by Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Ueber die Verschiedenheit d. menschl. Sprachbaues*, s. 78, fg. But it is not easy to establish any clear distinction between words used symbolically (*καθ' ομοίωσιν*) and analogically (*κατὰ ἀναλογίαν*). See Lersch, iii. 53; Heyse, p. 95. One or two of the instances given above are quoted by Mr. Boyes, in his *Illustrations to Æschylus and Sophocles*.

<sup>2</sup> In Chinese the word for a *gem* is also applied to a dainty.

is derived the whole system of genders for inanimate things, which was perhaps inevitable at that early childish stage of the human intelligence, when the actively-working soul attributed to everything around it some portion of its own life, but which has been wisely discarded by our own language as a useless encumbrance. To the quick fancy of the child of nature it seems impossible to regard anything as absolutely without life. The Indian thinks that the shade even of his arrow will accompany him to the regions of the blest. Hence, wellnigh everything is spoken of as masculine or feminine. How completely fanciful were the analogies which in each case suggested the gender is seen from the different genders attributed in different languages to the same thing, and cannot be more clearly illustrated than by the fact that the sun, which in nearly every other language is masculine, becomes feminine in German (*die Sonne*); and the moon, which so many nations worshipped as a goddess, is, in German, made masculine (*der Mond*).<sup>1</sup>

By a similar play of fancy, the names for various parts of the body are catachrestically applied to things without life.<sup>2</sup> We talk of the *leg* of a stool; of the *foot*, *crest*, *spur*, or *shoulder* of a mountain; of the *teeth* of a saw or a comb; of the *neck* of a bottle; the *tongue* of a balance or a shoe, the *eye* of a needle, the *head* of a cabbage, the *arm* of a chair, the *breast* of a wave, the *bosom* of a rose. Even an island is an *oe* or 'eye'; an isthmus is a neck; a harbour, a jaw;<sup>3</sup> a central place, a navel;<sup>4</sup> a crag is a tooth; a river-bank, a

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mayhew has collected some amusing anomalies to which the German genders are liable: thus, *Der Löffel*, the spoon; *die Gabel*, the fork; *das Messer*, the knife; *Der Anfang*, the beginning; *die Mitte*, the middle; *das Ende*, the end; *die Tinte*, the ink; *das Papier*, the paper, &c. Obviously there is no universal principle at work here, but only the play of a bizarre and arbitrary fancy.

<sup>2</sup> Heyse, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Σαλμύδησια γνάθος*, *Æsch. Prom. V.* 571. Both Job and Sophocles talk of 'the eyelids of the morn,' Job iii. 9; and in Ps. cx. 3, we even have 'the womb of the morning.'

<sup>4</sup> *Judg.* ix. 37; *Ezek.* xxxviii. 12; *Ps.* lxxiv. 12; *Soph. Œ.* 7;

lip; and a promontory, a ness, naze, or nose. Plants are named from animals or the limbs of animals, as fox-tail, mouse-ear, goat's-beard, cock's-comb, hare's-foot, crane-bill, lark-spur. Even dead instruments or parts of them are called by the names of animals, as a monkey, a battering-ram, a pig of lead,<sup>1</sup> chevaux de frise, a frog; *cochlea*, a screw; *testudo*, a penthouse of shields; *lupus*, a bit; ἰχθυός, a pitcher; κίραξ, a grappling-iron; ὄνος, a windlass. Ships and ploughs, both as wholes and in their parts, are spoken of as living things.<sup>2</sup> Attributes and functions of animate beings are transferred to the inanimate, as *living* water, the *living* rock, *quick*-silver, lively colours, couleur morte, bleu mourant, a living coal, dying embers; a comparison *stumbles*; an alley is *blind*; the ground *thirsts*, and *drinks in* the dew. By a reverse process, the life of vegetables is symbolically applied to the life of man; we talk of the scion of a noble *stock*; the *fruit* of good works; 'a rod of the *stem* of Jesse;' a *seed* of thought; the *propagation* of the Gospel; a *green* memory and a *green* old age. We may notice, in passing, how powerfully the poetic instinct reproduces these tendencies of early language. What Mr. Ruskin has called 'the pathetic fallacy,' is the indomitable desire to see in Nature, or at least to attribute to her, a sympathy in our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears. Hence, to the imaginations of the Psalmist and Prophet, 'the hills clap their hands, the valleys stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing;' 'the morning stars shout for joy;' 'the mountains<sup>3</sup> skip

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Eur. *Med.*; Plin. iii. 12. It is hardly worth while to heap up references for the other instances; for 'tooth,' see 1 Sam. xiv. 4; Job xxxix. 28. For lip, Gen. xxii. 17, &c. *Heb.*

<sup>1</sup> Which the Greeks called a *dolphin* of lead. Thuc. vii. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Heyse quotes Grimm, *Gesch. d. deutsch. Sprache*, p. 56 ff.; Pott, *Metaphern vom Leben*, in Aufrecht und Kuhn's *Zeitschr.* ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> It is curious to find the very same expressions in Chinese. 'Chu-king ait, Montes et colles pro gaudio tripudiant, volucres et bestię lætitiâ exultant et saltant ad citharę sonum.' P. Premare, *Notitia Lingue Sinicę*, p. 243. I am aware, however, that Premare's theories may have led him to heighten the similarity. See Stanislas Julien, *Lao Tseu Tao-te-Ting*, pref.

like rams, and the little hills like young sheep ;' the fir-trees howl, for the cedar is fallen ; the raging waves of the sea foam out their own shame ; the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork ; the sun is as a bridegroom going out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. In modern poets the same fancy recurs with constant intensity, so that there is hardly a single aspect of nature which has not been made to express or to interpret the thoughts and passions of mankind, and hardly a single modern poem which does not illustrate this imaginative power.

To the same source is due the universal prevalence of personification (or, as it is technically called, *Prosopopœia*) in ancient times. To many ancient nations the earth itself was a living creature, the stars were divine animals, and the very rainbow lived and drank the dew. No wonder that their

Fancy fetched  
E'en from the blazing chariot of the Sun  
A beardless youth, who touched a golden lute,  
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.

No wonder that, in their belief, an Oread danced on every hill, a Naiad lurked in every fountain, a Hamadryad lived or languished in every tree, and troops of Napæads and young Fauns or gamesome Satyrs sported among the forest glades, while

On the level brine  
Sleek Panope and all her sisters played.

Mythology no less than language springs in great measure from these plays of a self-deceiving fancy. The primal men thought thus because they could not otherwise express their feelings, and they spoke thus because this inability to express themselves otherwise in turn reacted on their thoughts. Nor is Mythology unknown even in these days. We have long personified under the name of Nature the sum-total of God's laws as observed in the physical world;

and now the notion of Nature as a distinct, living, independent entity seems to be ineradicable alike from our literature and our systems of Philosophy.

In the same manner human *relationships* are constantly attributed by analogy to external things. In Æschylus the Salmydessian harbour is a *stepmother* of ships ; flame-smoke is the *sister* of fire ; dust the *brother* of wind ; and plunderings are the blood-relations of runnings to and fro. In Pindar, Autumn is the tender *mother* of the Vine stalk ; and in Hipponax, the fig-tree is a sister of the vine. In the Semitic languages this figure occurs with astonishing frequency ; e.g. in Hebrew and Arabic, sparks are the sons of fire, an arrow the son of a bow, a disease the firstborn of death ; a sound from heaven is the daughter of a voice ;<sup>1</sup> a brave man is a son of valour ; an infant is the son of a year ; a confirmed boy is a son of the law ; a condemned criminal is a son of death ; a bad woman is a daughter of worthlessness ; lions are sons of haughtiness ; a lynx is the son of howling ; a vulture is the daughter of a wing.<sup>2</sup> The figure is more rare in modern poetry, yet Peele calls lightning ‘the faire spouse of thunder,’ and Tennyson says—

Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, *half-sister* to Delay.

But it is time to pass to still more important applications of the imaginative principle. It is not difficult to see how by its obvious aid man might, by the methods we have been observing, frame a nomenclature for all that he could see, or hear, or taste, or smell, or touch. But how was he to name the abstract, the ideal, the spiritual, the mental, the imponderable, the unseen ? how to name the intuitions of the

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Milton,—

‘Left that command  
Sole daughter of his voice.’

<sup>2</sup> For a large number of similar expressions in Arabic, especially in the names of birds and animals, see Bochart, *Hieroz.* vol. ii. p. 230.

reason, the conclusions of the understanding, the thoughts of the mind, the yearnings of the spirit, the emotions and passions of the soul—nay, how was he even to find names for the reason, the understanding, the spirit, the mind, the soul themselves?

Could he have invented new terms? would any mystic 'roots' have appeared by some inexplicable parthenogenesis in his intelligence? Whatever *might* have happened, this *did* not happen. Even if it had been possible to him, the instinctive dislike to needless neologisms, observable in every stage of the history of language, would have probably checked the development of such a power. At any rate the permutations and combinations of the few roots already supplied by onomatopœia and interjections were found amply sufficient for the new purpose for which they were required; and this application of existing sounds was at once easier and more agreeable than a fresh exercise of the power of Invention. We see from hundreds of instances that even the misappropriation of an old term is greatly preferred to the elaboration of a new one. The Greek, whose commonest relish was boiled fish ὄψον (from ἔψω I boil), used this same word even when his relish happened to be garlic or cress; and he preferred to say a horse-comber of camels (ἵππόκομος καμήλων) to saying a camel-comber; and a hecatomb of twelve oxen (from ἑκατον = 100) rather than invent an accurate name. The Romans with their military proclivities called *any* interspace an *intervallum*, which properly meant a space between the stakes of a palisade. 'The silver pyxis' is quite a proper expression, though *pyxis* properly means a *box* made of *box*-wood. Homer does not hesitate to say ἰκτιδὴ κυνέη, or helmet of weasel-skin, though *literally* the expression meant 'a weasel-skin dogskin,' just as 'ærea galea' would mean etymologically 'a brazen cat-skin.' In Exod. xxxviii. 8, we read of looking-glasses of brass,' where the misapplication is as perfectly correct as the phrase 'a white blackbird,' because the word 'looking-brass' would be intolerably novel. Mr. Tennyson shocks

no one by the line 'Whose blazing *wyvern weathercocked*<sup>1</sup> the spire.' The French talk of 'un cheval ferré d'argent' rather than compose a proper term for shoeing a horse with silver. A new name is *never* resorted<sup>2</sup> to unless it is absolutely essential and indispensable.

But quite independently of the necessity for finding articulate *sounds* to describe the phenomena of the mind—to express the strange unseen world of the Ego no less clearly than that of the Non-ego—there was another reason why all that was subjective should have been named by means of mere modifications of roots already acquired. For this shadowy unseen subjective world was *incapable of being known at all* except by analogy of those things of which we acquired a knowledge through the action of the senses. The mind, like the eye, becomes conscious of itself only by reflection from other things. We have seen already that men always explain and name the hitherto unknown by adopting the name of that known thing which most nearly resembles it; and that they seem incapable of understanding new phenomena except by the aid of such analogies as are supplied them by phenomena with which they are already familiar.<sup>3</sup> This may be an intellectual weakness, but it is one which recurs with the regularity of a law; and in the nomenclature of mental and spiritual entities it was inevitable, because those invisible things were only revealed and rendered cognisable by the things that are seen. 'It is a false assertion,' said Bacon<sup>4</sup> long ago, 'that the senses of man are a measure of all things; because, on the contrary, all perceptions, of the senses no less than of the mind, are

<sup>1</sup> Unless it be by the verb! Imagine its being conjugated thus: I weathercock, thou weathercockest, he, she, weathercocks, &c.!

<sup>2</sup> Savage languages *specialise* everything because they have so few abstract terms; but it is a law of progressing language, to get rid of all exuberance, and to content itself with the fewest words possible.

<sup>3</sup> Charma, p. 258.

<sup>4</sup> *Novum Organum*, i. 1, aph. 41; comp. Boethius, *De Consol. Phil.* 'Omne quod recipitur recipitur ad modum recipientis.'

from the analogy of man, not from the analogy of the Universe. And the human intellect is presented like an unequal mirror to the rays of external things; it mingles its own nature with the nature of things, which it distorts and confuses.' And this remark is the same as that of Proclus, being in fact a mere truism—τὸ γίγνωσκον κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γιγνώσκει φύσιν—'that which knows, knows in accordance with its own nature.'

Let us then see a few of the analogies which suggested a terminology for the world of mind.

It is strange to observe with what unanimity the names for the *soul* of man have been borrowed from the most obvious of invisible agencies—the wind 'which bloweth where it listeth,' or possibly rather from the *breath* of life.<sup>1</sup> Thus in Hebrew, alike נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*, the animal life (Job xii. 10) רוּחַ *ruach*, the human principle of life, and נְשָׁמָה *neshâmâh*, life considered as an inspiration of the Almighty,<sup>2</sup> all have the meaning of breath or wind; and therefore resemble the Greek words πνοή, πνεῦμα, and ψυχή, of which the latter is derived from ψύχω, I blow. The Latin word *animus* and *anima*, the German *Geist*, and the English *ghost*, have the same origin. If we take other words of similar meaning, we shall still find them to have been derived from the analogy offered to the rapidity of thought by swift physical motion. Thus our '*soul*,' the German '*Seele*,' is probably from the same root as the word Sea<sup>3</sup> and the Greek σίω; and the Greek θυμός comes from the root θίω, ἀπὸ τῆς θύσεως καὶ ζέσεως τῆς ψυχῆς.<sup>4</sup> Again the word *reason*, ratio, oratio,

<sup>1</sup> Just as 'blood' is often used for life, Lev. xvii. 2. See Gesenius, *Thesaurus*, ii. 901.

<sup>2</sup> Of these words *neshamah* is never, and *ruach* rarely (Eccl. iii. 21), applied to animals. In Gen. ii. 7, 'a living soul' should be rather 'a living animal,' or 'creature.' The Hindoos distinguish between *Brahmâtma* and *jīvâtma*, 'the breath of God' and 'the breath of Life.'—Vide Bohlen, *Genes. ad l.*

<sup>3</sup> See Heyse, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Crat.* p. 419 C.



the German *Rede*, &c., come from the Latin *reor*, which is in all probability connected with the Greek ῥέω, I flow; an etymology which, if correct, is curiously analogous to the derivation of 'soul' from the same root as the word 'sea.' If we enquire how men found a word for an act which most men consider so purely immaterial as that of *thinking*, we get to this result—that, since thought is inconceivable and impossible without *signs* of some description, and since words are the most universal of signs, it has been assumed that there is an indissoluble unity between thought and speech. Hence in Hebrew אָמַר and דִּבֶּר mean first to speak and then to think, while שִׁיחַ and הִגֵּג pass through the meanings of (first) to think, and then to speak, sigh,<sup>1</sup> and murmur. Other words to express the same thing are derived from the notions of cutting (dividing, dis severing), seeing, and acting (compare *thing* and think, *res* and *reor*). The Greek φράζω is to speak, φράζεσθαι, to say to oneself, i.e. to think, which, according to Forster, the South Sea Islanders express by 'speaking in the stomach.' In Latin, however, external accidents of thought are selected to represent thought, as *considerare*, (perhaps) to fix the eyes on the stars, like our expression 'star-gazing;' *deliberare*, to weigh in the balance, like the French *penser* and our 'to weigh a matter;' *cogitare*, to act with the mind; and, among others, *reor*, which Horne Tooke renders *I am thing-ed*,<sup>2</sup> (!) and which, if the Romans ever attached such an astonishing notion to it, would well deserve the title which Quintilian<sup>3</sup> gives it of a 'verbum horridum.'

Again, the soul with its faculties, emotions, and desires is shadowed forth in language by the various parts of the body in which they were once supposed to be localised, or by

<sup>1</sup> The similarity of the Hebrew שִׁיחַ, and our sigh, is a noticeable instance of resemblance due to onomatopœia.

<sup>2</sup> *Diversions of Purley*, ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Quintilian, *Instt.* viii. 3.

which they are capable of being externally indicated.<sup>1</sup> Thus in Hebrew the heart, the *liver*, and the kidneys are used for the mind, and understanding; 'the bowels' means mercy, like the Greek σπλάγχνα; 'the flesh' means lust; the loins strength; the *nose* is used for anger, so that 'long of nose' means patient, and 'short of nose' irritable; a 'man of lips' is a babbler (Job xi. 2); the *neck* is the symbol of obstinacy; the head of superiority: *thirst* or *paleness* the picturesque representatives of fear. In Greek the diaphragm (φρῆν, *renes*, reins) is used for the understanding; the liver for feeling; the breast for courage, the nostrils for contempt (cf. μυκτῆρες, &c.); the stomach and the bile for anger. Similarly in Latin, the nostrils are used for taste and refinement; the nose for satire;<sup>2</sup> the eyebrow for sorrow or disdain; the stomach for anger; the throat for gluttony. The Lithuanians use the same word for soul, heart, and stomach; and the same is probably true of many nations. Many of these metaphors have been transferred to English, and we also use the blood for passion (hot, or young blood), the phlegm for dulness, the spleen for envy; we say that a person has *sanguine* hopes; we talk of a melancholy man, which means properly a man whose bile is black; a man has a nervous style, or is nervous in the hour of trial; and we say of a bitter-minded critic that he has too much gall. The words 'body' or 'head' are common in all languages to express personality. The North American Indians constantly use 'body' in speaking of themselves, just as the Greeks used δῆμας and κάρα; 'c'est un plaisant corps' is a common expression in French; and in English 'head' has even passed into compounds such as boyhood, widowhood, and 'so much a-head.'

We are again reminded of the analogy between speech and writing. Tzetzes has preserved the following valuable frag-

<sup>1</sup> See numberless passages in Glass. *Philolog. Sacra*, p. 866 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Homo obesæ, or emunctæ naris in Horace, &c. In Turkestan, 'to be long-nosed' means to be proud. See Vămbéry's *Travels*.

ment of Chœremon on Hieroglyphics.<sup>1</sup> 'For joy,' he says, 'they paint a woman playing on a drum; for misfortune, an eye weeping; for non-possession, two empty hands outstretched; for rising, a snake coming out of a hole; for setting, the same going in; for return to life, a frog; for the soul, a hawk, and the same for the sun, and for God; . . . for a king, a bee; for the earth, a bull; a boy signifies increase; an old man, decay; a bow, sharp force; and there are a thousand other such.' We know, from modern researches,<sup>2</sup> that a cynocephalus stood for anger, a hand with a pair of oars for a workman, a crux ansata and serpent for immortal, and so on in an endless series of metaphorical pictures.

It is a proof of the extent of metaphor that almost every colour recalls at once its emblematic meaning.<sup>3</sup> Black is indissolubly connected with notions of death, mourning, villany, and misfortune; white with innocence, candour, and festivity; rose-colour with beauty and freshness; purple with magnificence, luxury, and pride; red and scarlet and crimson with shame, and sin, and crime; yellow with old age, decay, and jealousy; green with spring-time, vigour, and youth.

It might have been supposed that if there were any one domain of language, however restricted, from which Metaphor no less than Onomatopœia must necessarily be excluded, it would be the names of numbers. Yet what do we find on examination? Rapidly as they come to be regarded as abstractions, the signs of the *most* abstract conceptions, yet they, like all other abstractions, were once living metaphors, images borrowed from natural phenomena. Thus *five* (the same word precisely as *cinq*, *cinque*, *quinque*, *πέντε*, the Gothic *fimf*, the German *funf*, &c.) is derived from the Sanskrit *pāni*, a hand; just as in Celebes, and among

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Sharpe's *Egypt. Hieroglyphics*.

<sup>2</sup> *Encycl. Britan.*, art. *Hieroglyphic*.

<sup>3</sup> See Pott, *Etym. Forsch.* ii. 263 fg., where many illustrations are given.

various Indian tribes, the words for 'hand' and 'five,' or sometimes the words for 'hand' and 'two,' are identical. In Chinese *ny* and *ceul*, 'two,' also mean 'ears.' The Abiponian word for four is *gejenknatè*, which means the foot of an ostrich, from its four toes.<sup>1</sup> The name *mille*, a thousand, is in all probability connected with *miliun*,<sup>2</sup> millet grass, from the same root as *mola*, mill, &c., which are of onomatopoeitic origin. It is therefore a metaphor of the liveliest description. The Greek *χίλοι* is derived by some etymologists from *χῆλος* a heap of fodder,<sup>3</sup> *χέω* I pour, &c. Myriad is derived from the imitative root *mur*, which we find in murmur, the Greek *μύζω*, I pour, &c. The syllable *tama*, which in Galla forms the compounds of ten, is derived by Professor Pott from *tahamet*, hair, and Gilj<sup>4</sup> informs us that the Orinoko Indians touch their hair to indicate a large number, just as the Abipons heap up handfuls of grass, or handfuls of sand. The Mexicans used the word *tzontli*, 'hair,' for 400, and their hieroglyphic for 200 is half a feather. Their word for 8,000, *xiquipilli*, means 'sack,' because they had sacks which would exactly contain that number of cacao grains. In Chinese the word *tome*, which means 1,000, is borrowed from a root meaning 'mist,' and therefore resembles the Latin phrase 'Nubes peditum,' and a 'cloud of witnesses.' In Sanskrit the word *jaladhi*, 'ocean,' is used for 100 crores of lacs of rupees. The morbid imagination of the Hindoos made them familiar with excessive numbers, and though they formed some compound up to a million (*pra-yu-ta*), with the

<sup>1</sup> Pott, *Zählmethode*, p. 4; Pictet, *Les Orig. Ind.* ii. 578.

<sup>2</sup> This is at least as probable as the derivation from *μύριον*. Dr. Donaldson, *Varron*. p. 263, connects it with *miles*, *ὄμιλα*. Festus states that *miliun* comes from *mille*, but obviously the reverse of this is the fact. L. Benloew, *ubi infra*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Donaldson, *Varron. ib.* It is connected with a Sanskrit root, *Hila*, seed.

<sup>4</sup> 'Si toccano i lor capelli in alto di stupore.' Gilj, ii. 332, quoted by L. Benloew, *Recherches sur l'Origine des Noms de Nombre*, p. 64. Many of the particulars about numbers here mentioned are borrowed from Pott's *Zählmethode*, p. 120, &c.

syllable *yu* to add, yet for numbers like 10 billions they were obliged to resort to symbols such as *padma* or *abja*, 'lotus,' from the extreme fecundity of this plant, of which the fruit produces millions of grains. In Egyptian, a lotus-leaf attached to its stem was the sign for 1,000.<sup>1</sup> The Greek  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\varsigma$ , the Latin *calculus*, both recall the day when numeration was impossible without the aid of pebbles. If we examine the Semitic numerals we find a repetition of the same facts.<sup>2</sup> For instance the Hebrew *eleph*, meaning 1,000, is properly a herd of oxen, and possibly there may be an allusion to this meaning in the punning speech of Samson after his victory at Ramath-lehi; *mcâh* 100 is not improbably derived from *mo* water; *shibnâh* 7 is considered by Dr. Mommsen to mean 'a finger' from a root 'to point,' because after counting five on his left hand, and beginning the number six with the thumb of the *right* hand, the forefinger or indicator would be seventh in order; <sup>3</sup> *shenayîm* 'two' was doubtless suggested, like the name and form of the letter *shîn* itself, from *shên* a tooth, either from the bicuspid teeth or the double row in the mouth, which may also account for the invariable dual form of the word for-teeth in Hebrew. Strange as this may sound it admits of many parallels. In Thibet and Java 'two' is expressed by *paksha*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I must again refer to the able and interesting pamphlet of M. L. Benloew, who has however borrowed most of his facts from Prof. Pott.

<sup>2</sup> We may here observe that whatever may be the apparent resemblance of the Sanskrit *eka* 'one' to the Hebrew *echâd*, and the Sanskrit *shashî* 'six' to the Hebrew *shesh*, it is nearly certain (in spite of Dr. Donaldson's authority in *Maskil le Sopher*, p. 42 sqq.; *New Cratylus*, pp. 187, 194 sqq.) that the resemblance is *merely* apparent, and purely accidental. It is not indeed *impossible* that the Aryans borrowed from the Semites the *single* number *saptan* seven (Hebr. שבעה)

from its mystery and importance in the Semitic system. The reader may see the question clearly discussed in M. Benloew's pamphlet, p. 95, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Hofer's *Zeitschr.* i. 262; quoted by Dr. Donaldson, *Maskil le Sopher*, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Pott, l. c.

a wing, or by other members which are double, as *bâhu* arm, *vêtra* eye, &c. Among the Samoieds between the Yenisei and the Lena, the Sioux Indians, &c., two is expressed by 'hand' for the same reason. The history of the Hebrew word *gnashtei* 'eleven' is very curious; from *gnâshath* to labour comes *gnashtoth* a thought, and thence comes, according to Simonis, the word for *eleven*, meaning ten counted on the fingers and one in thought.<sup>1</sup> In English the word *score* is from the root *Sciran* to shear, because 'our unlearned ancestors to avoid the embarrassment of large numbers, when they had made twice ten notches, cut off the piece or *Talley* (Taglié) containing them; and afterwards counted the scores or pieces cut off.'<sup>2</sup> If then in a region so unpromising as that of numbers we find it so easy to trace the influence of onomatopœia and metaphor, where need we despair? May we not infer the origin of words in cases which are doubtful, from their origin in cases which are proved? May we not say with De Maistre, 'Ce qu'on sait dans se genre prouve beaucoup, à cause de l'induction qui en résulte, pour les autres cas : ce qu'on ignore, au contraire, ne prouve rien excepté l'ignorance de celui qui cherche.'

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<sup>1</sup> Gesenius, *Thes.* s. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Diversions of Purley*, ii. 4.

## CHAPTER XX.

METAPHOR *continued*.—METAPHOR IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES.

Among these, fancy next  
 Her office holds, of all external things  
 Which the five watchful senses represent,  
 She forms imaginations, aery shapes,  
 Which reason joining, or disjoining, frames  
 All what we affirm or what deny, and call  
 Our knowledge and opinion.'

MILTON, *Par. Lost*, v. 105.

THE pictorial Metaphors with which all languages abound become obscured in course of time, under the wearing and modifying processes of literary cultivation, into 'a mass of arbitrary, opaque, uninteresting conventionalisms.' But the more ancient, and the more uncivilised a language is, the fewer are its abstractions, and the more numerous are its undisguised metaphors. These metaphors, no less than those of every poet, are due to the spontaneous and unconscious<sup>1</sup> play of the fancy and the imagination. An abridged personification, says J. P. Richter,<sup>2</sup> is the natural and necessary language of savage life. In modern languages it is by no means always possible to trace the sensuous image underlying every word which implies conceptions incapable of any but a symbolical expression. But in such a language as Arabic we may still see what the condition of every language *must* once have been. There the dominion of fancy

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<sup>1</sup> Heyse, p. 100. Steinthal, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> J. Paul Richter, *Aesthetik*, § 56.

and poetry is still obvious, and every word is a picture of which the colours are still bright and clear: with us the power of abstraction is riper, and the sensuous element has left nothing more than the *traces* of its former prevalence.

In fact a style abounding in metaphors is now generally accepted as a proof of weakness, since for an advanced stage of thought it is necessary as far as possible to attach to each word one clear meaning, as little mingled as possible with mere external analogies. Bergmann tells us that the turns of phraseology which the Kalmucks most admire in their own language 'are precisely those which a more advanced civilisation, and a corresponding development of taste, would reject as spurious.' Similarly, 'the Koran is held by the devout Mohammedan to be the most admirable model of composition; but exactly those ornaments of diction and imagery, which he regards as the jewels of the whole, are most entirely in the childish taste of imperfect civilisation.' The gorgeous luxury of Oriental prose would with us be thought extravagant even in the most elaborate poetry, and we have long got beyond the stage which makes it almost impossible for an Oriental even to find a title for a book without calling it a mirror, a flower, or a pearl.

A glance at the metaphors of some Semitic, Aryan, and Allophylian nations will perhaps illustrate and relieve our subject.

In Hebrew the paucity of words necessitates the constant use of metaphor. 'The Hebrew has scarcely any individuated words. Ask a Hebrew scholar if he has any word for a *ball* (as a tennis ball, *pila lusoria*); he says, "O yes." What is it then? Why he gives you the word for *globe*. Ask for *orb*, for *sphere*, &c. Still you have the same answer. The individual circumstantiations are swallowed up in the general outline.'<sup>1</sup> This latter instance is rather *catachresis* than metaphor; i.e. it is rather the application of the *same* word

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<sup>1</sup> De Quincey *on Language*, Works, viii. 81. To this is due the extreme uncertainty of rendering many Hebrew words.



to different things, than the direct suggestion of a comparison. But we can best see the rapid working of metaphor in the extraordinary diversities of meaning of which the same Hebrew word<sup>1</sup> is capable. Take for instance the word תֹּר (Tôr), which means a turtle-dove, an ox, 'a string of pearls,' a turn, and a manner. Or again take the word גֹּר (goor); in its meaning of 'a lion's whelp' we see the imitative principle again at work; but how comes the verb, goor, to acquire the meanings to sojourn, to assemble, to be afraid, to reverence, to worship? Or take the word עָרַב gnârabh, which in its various conjugations means to mix, to exchange, to stand in the place of, to pledge, to interfere, to be familiar; and also to disappear, to set, and to do a thing in the evening; besides all this, with various vowel modifications the same three letters mean 'to be sweet,' a fly, or beetle, an Arabian, a stranger, the weft of cloth, the evening, a willow, and a raven. Assuming that all these significations are ultimately deducible from one and the same root, we see at once the extent to which metaphor must have been at work. In most instances the steps of the transition have vanished. In Hebrew the same word means *fatness* and *ashes*; <sup>2</sup> perhaps this may be because the ancients used ashes for manure; but who shall tell us with any certainty why לָבַב means 'to become wise,' and לָבַב to make cakes?

Again, all Hebrew *literature* abounds in metaphor. Glasius, in his laborious *Philologia Sacra* (pp. 807-912), has collected innumerable examples of metaphor drawn from the sun, and moon, and stars; from the times of the day and night; from fire, air, and water; from the body, the life, the senses, and the actions of men; and in short from almost every observable phenomenon of nature and of life. To

<sup>1</sup> 'Non est mirum doctissimos etiam Judæorum hodie nihil certi de rerum nominibus, ut animalium, plantarum, metallorum, vestium, instrumentorum, docere posse.' Gesner, *Hist. Qurdrup.*

<sup>2</sup> Plin. xvii. 9. Gesen. *Thes.* s. v. דָּשָׁן.

take one set of phenomena alone, the mere names of the vine, the olive, the cedar, the lion, the wolf, the serpent, the fox, the horse, the heifer, the goat, the sheep will call up at once in the memory of the Biblical student the bold metaphors with which they are associated. Christ is 'the true vine,' 'the branch,' 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah,' and 'the Lamb that was slain;' Herod is 'that fox;' Esau is 'a wild ass of a man;' <sup>1</sup> 'without are dogs,' and the Gentiles are 'dogs;' Satan is 'a serpent,' and 'a roaring lion;' the Cretans are 'evil beasts.'

With the use of metaphor in Aryan languages we are familiar, and therefore choosing the Greek tragedians as our storehouse of illustrations, we may from their pages glean the further fact that in the metaphors of a language we may always learn the habits, the amusements, and the tastes of a nation. For no metaphors are so common among these Athenians as the very ones which we should *expect* to be most frequently before their minds, namely, those derived from hunting, and from rowing. *Θηρᾶν* 'to hunt' comes to be a mere ornate word for 'to pursue.' Thus Xerxes desires 'to hunt Athens' (*Pers.* 229); an ambitious man 'hunts for the tyranny' (*Æd. Tyr.* 540); 'it is not right to hunt impossibilities' (*Ant.* 92); 'they will have come to hunt after marriages which cannot be hunted' (*Prom. Vinct.* 860). Nautical metaphors are still more frequent. As for *ῥέεσθαι* 'to row' we have it in all kinds of conjunctions; we hear of 'rowing a plan' (*Ant.* 159); to row with another is to aid him (*Aj.* 1307); the two Sons of Atreus row threatenings (*Id.* 246); 'row round your heads the tabouring of your hands' (*Sept. c. Theb.* 836). A fair wind from a person's eyes wafts away a lukewarm friend (*Trach.* 812); we even are told of 'the harbour of a cry,' 'the prow of the heart,' and 'the rudders of horses.' The Greeks are generally supposed to have had little or no sympathy with external

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<sup>1</sup> Compare the Sanskrit *nara-sinha* man-lion, and 'two lion-like men of Moab.' 2 Sam. xxiii. 20.

nature, yet the euphemistic pleasure which they display in the incessant use of the word 'blossom' (ἀνθος), no less than their fondness for garlands, shows that they were far from being dead to impressions of natural beauty. 'Disease *blooms* forth upon the flesh. The nightingale is shrouded in a *bloomy bower of woes*. The hoariness of old age is a white *blossoming*.<sup>1</sup> The misfortunes of a noble family are made to burst forth *into bloom*. The haughty speech is the *efflorescence* of the lips. Groans are the *flowers* plucked from the tree of anguish, and the chanters of the funeral dirge shower these upon the bier; so that not only the custom but the very language of the Greeks, veiled as it were the deformity of death, and scattered the corpse with flowers.'<sup>2</sup>

Before leaving the subject of Aryan metaphors we may further observe that the metaphors of a writer, no less than those of a nation, always carry upon them the strong mark of his own individuality—as for instance the constantly recurring 'bow' and 'wings' in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante; and that the metaphors most frequently adopted at any particular epoch stamp with terrible energy the characteristics of the age. Take for instance the commencement of the *Christiade* by F. Hojeda :—

Canto al Hijo de Dios, humano y muerto  
Con dolores y afrentas por el hombre :  
Musa divina, en su costado abierto  
Baña mi lengua y muevela en su nombre—

'I sing the Son of God, who was man and died for man amid anguish and insults; divine Muse, *steep my tongue in his open side*, and make it move in his name.' Well may M. Arnould,<sup>3</sup> from whom I quote the lines, ask whether any one but a Spanish monk in the time of Philip the Second could ever have written them !

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eccl. xii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Boyes, p. liv. Mr. Boyes has so amply and so happily illustrated this subject of the metaphors in Greek tragedy, that in this paragraph I found all that I wanted done to my hand.

<sup>3</sup> *Ess. de Théorie et d'Hist. Lit.* p. 203.

If we now turn to the metaphors in use among savage races we shall find them still more distinct and picturesque. Take for instance a few specimens of *Kafir* metaphors.<sup>1</sup> *Ingcala* 'flying ant' means 'great dexterity'; *inja* 'dog' means a dependant; *quanka* 'to be snapped asunder' means 'to be quite dead'; *zikhla* 'to eat oneself' means 'to be proud,' and therefore is an exact parallel to Mr. Tennyson's expression—

Upon himself, himself did feed.

'He is a wolf' means 'he is greedy'; 'he is an ox' means 'he is strong.'<sup>2</sup>

Some of the *Malay* metaphors are very lively. Thus *mabuk-ombak* 'sea-sick' means properly 'wave-drunk'; *mata-ari* 'the sun' is literally 'the eye of day'; *mata-kaki* 'the ankle' is 'the eye of the foot'; *mata-ayar* 'a spring' is 'the eye of water' (compare the Hebrew יַיִן). The expression for an 'affront' is '*charcoal on the face*'; a key is the 'child of a lock'; a knee-pan is the '*cocoanut of the knee*'; malice is 'rust of the heart'; sincerity 'a white heart,' like the Latin '*candidum ingenium*'; impudent is 'face of board.'<sup>3</sup>

Scarcely less ingenious are the metaphors in *Chinese*. 'Capricious' is expressed by 'three mornings, four evenings'; cunning or persuasive speech by 'convenient hind-teeth, ready front-teeth'; 'disagreement' by 'you East, I West'; attention by 'fine-heart.' *Neng* 'a bear' means 'powerful'; *hao* 'a boar' is 'a brave man'; *non* 'the roar of water among stones' is 'anger.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Appleyard's *Kafir Grammar*, p. 71. Some of these are quoted by Prof. M. Müller, in his Second Series of Lectures. I had however made a note of these long before I saw them there.

<sup>2</sup> Appleyard, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford's *Malay Gram. and Dict.* i. 62. For some specimens of Australian metaphors, see the *Transactions of the Ethn. Soc.* 1865, p. 292.

<sup>4</sup> Premare, *Not. Ling. Sin.* p. 242.

We encounter once more in Chinese the phenomenon which we have observed in Hebrew, in the number of different meanings possessed by the same root; a phenomenon not solely but *mainly* explicable by the influence of metaphor. For instance, *chou* means a book, a tree, great heats, Aurora, and the loss of a wager;<sup>1</sup> *Oû* means 'me,' and also an orator, nothing, a bat, and a kind of tree;<sup>2</sup> *Yû* means 'me,' and also to agree, to rejoice, a kind of measure, stupid, a black ox, &c.; *Yù* 'thou' means also milk, tender, to eat, honey-cake; *Y* 'he' or 'she' is also to laugh in spite of oneself, to sigh, a new-born infant, respect, a stout dog, &c.; *Tchÿ* the sign of the genitive means also it, him, branches, to sustain, yellow fruit, a dead tree, and a labourer!<sup>3</sup>

We must here digress for a moment to remove a misconception. It has been the fashion to compare these homonyms with others which have not the remotest connection with them. Thus we have seen (in the note) that the sound 'cent' has six different meanings in French, but these words had *no* original connection with each other, since *cent* comes from *centum*, *sans* from *sine*, *sang* from *sanguis*, *sent* from *sentit*, *sens* from *sensus*, *sont* from *sunt*, and *s'en* from *se inde*.<sup>4</sup> Thus *aune* means an alder-tree and an ell, but in

<sup>1</sup> The missionary Bourgeois, in his *Lettres édifiantes*, bitterly complains of the consequent difficulty which he experienced in learning Chinese.

<sup>2</sup> It might be supposed that such a multiplicity of homonyms would introduce endless confusion into a language. Practically, however, such is not the case; e.g. in French the words *cent*, *sang*, *s'en*, *sans*, *sent*, *sont*, *sens*, widely different as is their meaning, are never confused. It is the same in English with *heir*, *ere*, *e'er*, *air*, and *Ayr*, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Benloew, *De quelques Caractères du Lang. Prim.* p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Heyse, 210, 220. Similarly we have *vers* 'towards,' from *versus*; *vers* 'a verse,' from *versus*; *verre* 'glass,' from *vitrum*; *ver* 'a worm,' from *vermis*; *vère* 'truly' (in old French), from *verè*. In fact, so numerous are these *homonyms*, that in 1807 a *Dictionnaire des Homonymes* was published in Paris by M. de la Madelaine. Charma, p. 272. An interesting list of English homonyms may be found in Dwight's *Mod. Philolog.* ii. 311.

the former meaning it comes from *alvus*, in the latter from *ulna*; Hail! as a salutation in English is the German *heil*, but as congealed water-drops it is the German *Hagel*; pêcher 'a peach' is *Malus Persica*, pêcher 'to fish' is from *piscari*, and pêcher 'to sin' from *peccare*; tour 'a tower' is from *turris*, and when it means 'a turn' i.e. a walk, it is from a late vulgar sense of *tornare*; louer 'to praise' is from *laudare*, louer 'to let' from *locare*. These instances are only false analogies of those which we have been considering. They are accidental, being due merely to the phonetic corruption or disorganisation of a language in its advance; whereas those in Hebrew, Chinese, or Coptic are truly primordial and arose from that indetermination which characterises every primitive language—an indetermination which it is the object of every cultivated language to mould into gradual precision.

There are certain dialects or languages spoken by whole classes of men in all countries, yet unowned by any nation. Such are the Italian *gergo*, *furbesco*; the Spanish *germania*; the Portuguese *Calão*; the German *rothwelsch* (red Italian?); the Dutch *bargoens* or *dieventael*; the English *cant*, *slang*, *thieves' Latin*, *pedlars' French*, *St. Giles's Greek*, *flash-tongue*, *gibberish*, &c.; the French *narquois* or *Argot*. This language of crime and misery—'this pustulous vocabulary of which each word seems an unclean ring of a monster of mud and darkness,' is formed—(and the same remark applies partially to the harmless *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean, the *Língua geral* of South America, the Chinese pigeon-English, the Haytian French, the jargons of the Bastards of Africa, the Canadian half-breeds, and the English, French, and Chinooks in Columbia)<sup>1</sup>—by the adoption of foreign words, by the absolute suppression of grammar, by grotesque tropes, wild catachresis, and allegoric

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<sup>1</sup> See specimens in Latham, *Var. of Man*, p. 320; Appleyard, *Kafir Gram.* p. 10; Nodier, *Notions de Linguistique*; Hutchinson, *Ten Years among the Ethiopians*, pp. 21-32, &c.

metonymy. The study of these corrupt dialects is a most fruitful field for the philologist, and suggests many of the primitive expedients and tendencies of language. But Metaphor is the widest and most important basis of them all, and it is adopted conventionally for the express purpose of disguise and concealment. The words chosen are all from the vernacular, but the senses are entirely different, and are all allegorical. Borrow points this out in his book on the Gipsies, and M. Michel,<sup>1</sup> who has thought the Argot worthy of a serious historian, and who is the greatest authority on the subject, says, 'La métaphore et l'allégorie semblent former en effet *l'élément principal* de ce langage. . . . Un fait qui ne saurait manquer de frapper un esprit philosophique à l'aspect de ce dialecte, *c'est que partout l'argot est basé sur le même principe, c'est-à-dire sur la métaphore*; et à cet égard toutes les branches de ce jargon se ressemblent.'<sup>2</sup> Again, M. Victor Hugo, whose splendidly powerful chapters on this subject in *Les Misérables* are well worth the study of the Philologer, says, 'Slang is nothing but a vestibule, in which language having some wicked action to commit, disguises itself. It puts on these *masks of words, these rags of metaphors*. In this way it becomes horrible and can scarcely be recognised. The metaphors say everything and conceal everything. The devil becomes "the baker." "Les sorciers sont solliciter les gails à la lune," "the prowlers are going to steal horses at night." This passes before the mind like a group of spectres, and we know not what we see.'

Metaphor then is universal, and the Imagination plays a

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<sup>1</sup> *Études de Philologie Comparée sur l'Argot*, par F. Michel; Paris, 1856. Victor Hugo dwells on it in *Les Misérables*, *Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné*, and *Notre Dame de Paris*; and it is also touched on in Vidocq, Eugène Sue, &c. There are several English slang dictionaries, &c., beginning as far back as the year 1560; and also in other languages, as *Studii sulle Lingue Furbesche*, Milan, 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Michel, *ubi supra*, pp. i., xxiv. The singular points of resemblance in the Argots of different nations are pointed out by Biondelli, *Studii Linguistici*, in a very interesting paper, *Origine, Diffusione, e d'Importanza delle Lingue Furbesche*, pp. 107-120.

prominent part in every form of human language. It is in their earliest dawn (as we have seen already) that languages are most metaphorical. As civilisation advances, the fancy, to which the origin of the word was due, is forgotten altogether, or remains a dead letter to the popular consciousness even when the etymology of the word is known.<sup>1</sup> The intermediate factor vanishes, and the word appears as the immediate expression of the representation in its totality. To take one or two instances out of thousands: the word 'caprice' is in very common use, and is a word to which a most definite meaning is attached; yet out of the myriads who use it correctly how many are distinctly aware that it is a metaphor derived from the swift, short leaps of the wild goat on the hills<sup>2</sup> (*capra*, compare *ἀτίξ* from *ἀτίσσω*), just as the Italian *nuce* comes from *nucia* a goat, and *ticchio* a freak from *ziki* a kid, and the French *verve* from *vervex* a bell-wether? Or again how often do people when they 'make a stipulation' recall the fact that the origin of the expression is a custom, dead for centuries, of giving a straw in sign of a completed bargain? or when they talk of money remember that the word is derived from the accident that gold and silver were coined by the Romans<sup>3</sup> in the temple of Juno Moneta? We speak of muskets without being aware that the word is ultimately derived from the onomatopœia *musso* I buzz, whence come *musca* a fly, *muscatus* speckled, *muscheta* a sparrow-hawk, and hence a musket;<sup>4</sup> we talk of

<sup>1</sup> Heyse, 164.

<sup>2</sup> See Diez, s. v. *Capriccio*; Scheler, s. v. Mr. Wedgwood, with less probability, connects the word with the roots *riccio*, *ericius* (a hedgehog), *hérissier*, *φλισσειν*. *Etym. Dict.* s. v.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the Romans thought just as little of the interesting historic fact fossilised in the word *pecunia*; and the Greeks of that involved in the derivation of *ὀβολος*, which shows that money was first used in *ingots* (*βέλος*).

<sup>4</sup> This derivation seems at least as probable as the one suggested by Mr. Wedgwood. The Italians called their muskets, &c., by the names of hawks, *falconetto*, *sagro*, &c.; compare the French *sacre*, *couleuvrine*, &c. The Italian *terzuolo*, a pistol, properly means a male hawk,



varnish without recalling the golden tresses of Berenice;<sup>1</sup> of intoxication with no reference to the poison with which arrows were once smeared; of a dunce without any intentional insult to the memory of Duns Scotus; of a poltroon with no allusion to its imaginary origin; of a saunterer with no reference to the Holy Land; and not to multiply instances which any one can find in hundreds for himself, we go on ending our year with the months of *September, October, November, and December*, without once troubling ourselves with the consideration that the months are really the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, and that our nomenclature merely continues to embalm an error of Romulus nearly three thousand years ago.

This complete evanescence of the original meaning of words and phrases gives rise to that *confusion* of metaphors which is so common in every literature. There is perhaps in careful writers too pedantic a scruple against ever mingling two conceptions originally distinct. We are not of course advocating such reckless intermixtures as Lord Castlereagh's 'My Lords, the main *feature* on which this *question* hinges,' or as that by the poetic young tradesman, quoted by Coleridge, who said that sorrows

Round my heart's leg tie their galling chain ;

But when Milton wrote in one of his finest sonnets

I bate no jot  
Of heart or hope but still bear up, and steer  
*Uphillward,*

we cannot but regret that the mere confusion of metaphor involved in the words 'steer uphillward'<sup>2</sup> would have made

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perhaps from the fancy that the third bird in a nest was a male, or because the male was one-third smaller than the female.

<sup>1</sup> This word, however, is disputed. It may come from the city Berenice, where amber-coloured nitre was found, or from *vitrinus* glassy. See Diez, s. v. *Vernice*, ed. Donkin.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. *Sams. Agonistes* :—

' I hear  
The tread of many feet *steering* this way.'

him alter that fine expression into the much tamer phrase 'Right onward.' Who is annoyed by the confusion involved in Mark vii. 21, 22, *Out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, &c., '*an evil eye*;' or in 1 Tim. vi. 19, 'Laying up *in store* a good *foundation*' (ἀποθησαυρίζοντες); or in 2 Cor. v. 2, 'to be *clothed* upon with our *house*;' or in 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'that they may recover themselves (lit. *grow sober*, ἀνανήψωσι) from the *snare* of the devil?'<sup>1</sup> The greatest poets have not been the most careful to avoid these incongruities. Æschylus talks of 'a *beacon-light* being a *lucky throw of the dice*'<sup>2</sup> for a sentinel. Horace says,

*Urit enim fulgore suo, qui prægravat artes  
Infra se positas.*

And Shakspeare, to say nothing of his 'taking up arms against a sea of troubles,'<sup>3</sup> shows in every play his lordly disregard of mere pedantic conventionalities in the way of accuracy. This passage, 'extrait d'une pièce intitulée La Tempête,' particularly offends the critical sense of M. Varinot, the author of the *Dictionnaire des Métaphores*.<sup>4</sup>

The charm dissolves apace,  
And as the morning *steals* upon the night  
*Melting* the darkness, so their rising senses  
Begin to *chase* the *ignorant fumes* that *mantle*  
Their clearer reason.

What English reader, with ordinary breadth of understand-

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Probably the metaphor is a reminiscence of Euripides, *Iph. Taur.* 266 :

ἄκροισι δακτύλοισι πορθμείων ἔχνος.

The word πορθμείω might have been added to the naval metaphors before alluded to, for Euripides employs it constantly.

<sup>1</sup> Glass. *Phil. Sacr.* p. 919.

<sup>2</sup> τῆς ἐξ βαλούσης τῆσδ' ἐμοὶ φρυκτωρίας. *Agam.* 33.

<sup>3</sup> 'No image of the sea is suggested; and arms, incongruous in relation to the literal sea, is not so in relation to a multitude; besides that the image *arms* itself evanesces for the same reason into *resistance*.' De Quincey, *Works*, vii. 121 (Black's ed.).

<sup>4</sup> *Paris*, 1819.

ing, found anything to jar upon his mind in this passage? Yet listen to the groan of the French critic! 'Il y a là tant de choses mal-assorties, que l'esprit ne peut rien voir avec clarté. Le matin qui se *glisse* furtivement sur l'obscurité, et qui en même temps la *fond*, les esprits des hommes qui *chassent des fumées*, des fumées *ignorantes*, et des *fumées* qui *voilent*. Un poète peint un *ange* (!) qui franchit les airs, et le représente au même moment comme étant à cheval, et comme *faisant voile* sur le *sein* de l'air. Il est impossible que l'imagination se forme un tableau net d'objets aussi confus.' Poor outraged historian of French metaphors! and what a drunken savage Shakspeare must have been!

Many have bewailed the necessity of metaphor as the source of constant error, and the strongest proof of the weakness of our intellectual faculties. 'Verborum translatio,' says Cicero, 'constituta est inopiæ causâ.'<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly it is so; but with such faculties as we *have*, metaphor, and the necessity for the metaphoric element in language, becomes fruitful of blessings.<sup>2</sup> It becomes a means whereby we observe and compare the analogous phenomena of the physical and intellectual world. It adds something of the grace, and charm, and mystery of nature to the thoughts of man. It is the very essence of our most poetical conceptions, and the best mode of shadowing forth our profoundest intuitions. 'Thought,' says the eloquent and ingenious Du Ponceau, 'is vast as the air; it embraces far more than languages can express; or rather, languages *express* nothing. They only make thought flash in electric sparks from the speaker to the hearer. A single word creates a crowd of conceptions, which the intellect combines and marshals with lightning-like rapidity.'<sup>3</sup>

It is idle therefore to complain that metaphor supposes a certain indigence, and that if the intellect were endowed

<sup>1</sup> Cic. *De Oratore*, iii. 39. Cf. Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, ii. 34, &c.

<sup>2</sup> See this subject more fully discussed in the *Origin of Language*, p. 136 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Ét. du Ponceau, *Syst. Gram. des Langues de l'Amérique*, p. 32.

with the power of directly and immediately seizing any phenomenon, and of providing an independent expression for every modification of our minds, it would be unnecessary to drag ourselves from one analogous idea to another.<sup>1</sup> Obviously we must take the mind as we find it ; and since it has *not* been endowed with the power of direct intuition into the nature of things it cannot dispense with tropes and allegories ; which so far from hindering and obscuring our power of insight, are, on the contrary, its mightiest assistants.<sup>2</sup> In the true and etymological sense of the word, they *illustrate*, i.e. they pour a flood of light upon our thoughts. And, reversing the metaphor, we may say with equal truth, that they are the gracious clouds, through whose veil it is alone possible for us to gaze upon the too-dazzling sun.

A Language without figures and metaphors would of necessity be a language without poetry. We have already shown the truth of this assertion<sup>3</sup> by comparing the language of *Science* with the language of common life. It will be interesting to illustrate it further by taking the instance of any 'philosophical language' framed in strict accordance with these supposed principles of perfection.

'Une langue philosophique !' says Du Ponceau, 'bon Dieu, qu'est-ce qu'une langue philosophique ? . . . une langue philosophique ! et pourquoi non un monde, une création tout entière de la main et de la façon des philosophes ?' There have however been several attempts at languages framed on these accurate principles, intended by their inventors to serve as an unerring medium of communication among all nations.<sup>4</sup> The seventeenth century seems

<sup>1</sup> Charma, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> See Arist. *Rhet.* III. i. 2. In fact they perform in language something of the same function as the symbolic actions of orators or poets. They make our thoughts more clear, graphic, vivid.

<sup>3</sup> *Origin of Lang.* p. 134 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> M. Charma, pp. 290-300, gives a long list of writers who have touched on this subject, as Herm. Hugo, Bacon, Des Cartes, Dalgarno, Wilkins, Becker, Kircher, Jo. Voss, Leibnitz, De Brosses, Changeux, De Maimieux, Destruitt de Tracy, Laromiguière, Grosselin, &c. See

to have been particularly fertile in them. A German prince offered a reward of 300 crowns for the best universal language, and Becker wrote in consequence his *Notitia Linguarum universalis*. The prince repaid him by compliments, and asked him to dinner, 'which was more,' says Du Ponceau, 'than the thing was worth.' It was published in 1661 at Frankfort, and is now very rare. In the same year was published Dalgarno's *Ars Signorum, vulgo Character universalis*. Lond. 1661.<sup>1</sup> It is founded on the assumption that there has been a complete and certain distribution of all things and ideas. A few years after (in 1668) appeared the celebrated *Essay towards a Philosophical Language* of Bishop Wilkins, occupying an enormous folio volume. Its ingenuity was undoubted, and 'uniformity, the perfection of small geniuses, was observable throughout it.' The substantives were a series of antitheses. Thus *da* meant God, *ida* devil; *dad* heaven, *odad* hell; *dab* soul, *adab* body; *pida* presence, *pidas* absence; *tadu* power, *tadus* imbecility. The numbers were fashioned on similar principles,—*pobal* 10, *pobar* 100, *pobam* 1,000. It would be impossible to imagine any spoken language so inconceivably dry, and dreary, and bald, and dead as this. 'I do not know,' observes Du Ponceau,<sup>2</sup> 'whether any one ever

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especially Degerando, *Des Signes et de l'Art de penser*, iv. 10. Some of these systems were founded on a self-explaining pasigraphy, in which e.g. necessity was expressed by a chain, duration by a clock, equality by two parallel lines, a method by a geometrical instrument, &c.

<sup>1</sup> See Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iii. 362.

<sup>2</sup> He mentions also the Spécieuse-Générale, a philosophic language by which Leibnitz designed to reduce to a sort of calculus the expression of all truths. It appears from a work of Raspe (*Hist. Lingue Characteristica*) to have represented every idea by numbers, and was supposed capable both of eliminating all errors, and leading to new discoveries. 'It only wanted a grammar and dictionary to make it complete!' Another was invented by a M. Faignet, and England was imposed upon by a pretended language of the Island of Formosa, invented by a French deserter, who ludicrously called himself Psalmanasar! See Du Ponceau, pp. 26-31. Probably hundreds of such attempts have been still-born. Quite recently I have seen one by M. Letellier, *Éta-*

studied, learnt, or cultivated this language. It is only found in some libraries, a sad monument of the aberrations of the human intellect.' Without absolutely endorsing so severe a remark, we may certainly agree with Hallam that 'it is very fortunate that neither of these ingenious but presumptuous attempts to fasten down the progressive powers of the human mind by the cramps of association had the least success.'

The metaphors without which no language worthy of the name can even exist are a proof of the *human* invention of language, because they are confessedly formed on indirect and imperfect analogies, and are sources of constant<sup>1</sup> ambiguity and error. But for this very reason they are best suited to our limited human condition. Who would insult the stars because at night he can no longer see the sun? We live but in the twilight and the moonlight, and the very dimness of our vision saves us perhaps from a thousand dangers. The old *bon mot*, found in so many different forms,<sup>2</sup> 'that the true use of speech is not so much to express our thoughts as to conceal them,' false as it is in one sense, is capable, in another sense, of an innocent application. At no period of history was it more evident than now, that the passions of men would be far more furious and uncontrollable than they are, if it were not possible to maintain a truce by the common acceptance of words and formulas which are fairly and honestly capable of expressing widely different forms of belief. The gracious shadows, the beneficent imperfections of language, save us from being scorched up by a fulness of truth for which we

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*blissement immédiat de la Langue Universelle*, 1862. There must be singular fascination in a problem which has interested so many great minds. Among others Mr. Rabbage was once attracted by it. *Pas-sages from the Life of a Philosopher*, p. 25.

<sup>1</sup> See Mill's *Logic*, i. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*. The saying is usually but erroneously attributed to Talleyrand; it occurs also in one of Voltaire's dialogues, and in a couplet of Young's. See *Pearls and Mock Pearls of History*.

are yet but ill-adapted. Unhappy would be the nation which should have a perfect language. It would be a field of battle continually bathed in blood ; language would then be the mirror of our thoughts, and would reveal with intolerable clearness all our passions, and all our susceptibilities.<sup>1</sup>

We have spent some time over the consideration of metaphors, but perhaps not too long, when we consider that by their means a breath of air may be said to become the picture and exponent alike of the seen and of the unseen Universe.

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<sup>1</sup> Du Ponceau, p. 225. This is one of the many striking thoughts with which his singularly able Essay abounds.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## OTHER LINGUISTIC PROCESSES.

Ὁ λόγος διάφωνος καὶ ὁ νοῦς ποικίλως τρέπεται.

PYRRHO in Diog. Laert. ix. xi. 95.

IT may be well, before we proceed farther, to sum up briefly the main results which the previous pages have been intended to develop, to illustrate, or to prove.

Language then was not a direct Revelation of the Almighty ; nor was it an inevitable result of our physical organisation ; nor was it a purely mechanical invention, accepted by general agreement, in consequence of a felt necessity :—but the *capacity* for Language was a part of our human constitution, and in the development of this capacity, the Senses, the Memory, the Understanding, the Emotion, the Will, and the Imagination all played their part. The great secret—the Divine Idea of Language—became intuitively evident to man from the working of his Intellect upon two strictly analogous facts. He found that the effect of powerful passion was to force from him involuntary spontaneous sounds, which, when repeated, recalled the passions by which they had been originally stimulated, and not only recalled them by virtue of the Law of Association to him who had originally felt them, but also conveyed and expressed them to others who were similarly affected by similar causes. But besides this, as may still be observed in children, the delicate sensibility of the nervous system in the still fresh and unworn human organism gave rise to a spontaneous echo of external sounds, an echo which partly



repeated and imitated the sounds themselves, and partly modified them in accordance with the ideal impression which they reproduced. Originally this repercussion of the sounds which had thrilled the auditory nerve was not due primarily to an instinct of conscious imitation, but to a far subtler law of physical sympathy with the outer world ; but as it conveyed a pleasurable sense of power it would at once be adopted as a voluntary exercise apart from any necessity. In this instance also it would be instantly discovered that the imitative sounds, however modified by organic or subjective influences, inevitably recalled, by the same law of association, the external phenomena with which they were connected. In both cases it would be instantly discovered that sounds were capable of becoming signs not of sounds only but of things. Here then were the elements of language ; here lay hidden the germs of that infinite discovery which made man worthy of his destined immortality ; here, ready provided by the working of divine laws, were the materials by which he was enabled to express his own sensations, and to recall the most striking aspects and influences of the world in which he lived.

The nascent intelligence, sharpened by the wants of life, at once saw the importance of this marvellous faculty, and began with unerring and unconscious instinct to work upon it. Man soon found that it was not necessary to rest content with crude interjections and vowel sounds, to express his own feelings, or rough reproductions to recall the living creatures and numberless influences of the outer world. The interjections and imitations were more and more modified, till they barely retained the faintest echo of their sensuous origin. They were soon accepted as purely ideal signs, and their history and derivation was in the course of ages as completely forgotten or obscured as if they had been meaningless tokens arbitrarily adopted and absolutely devoid of any historical connection with the meanings for which they stood.

The intimate relation—perhaps we may say the ultimate

identity—of the effects produced by different senses, would at once suggest the possibility of observing analogies so far as to translate into sounds addressed to the ear alone, the impressions produced by every other sense; and it would be an easy transition to adopt the same principle in shadowing forth by self-suggesting symbols those spiritual and intellectual phenomena which were none the less really felt from their being intangible and unseen. The power of Imagination, however simply and almost unconsciously exercised, was fully adequate to the task thus imposed upon it. In fact, it is very probable that long periods would elapse before it was called upon in any large measure to claim its dominion over the higher realms of speech. The rich religious, spiritual, metaphysical, and moral vocabulary of the most civilised Aryan nations must not be taken as any measure of the wants of primeval language. If to this day the Chinese can only express the notions of ‘virtue’ or ‘happiness’ by crude analyses four words long;—if many savage nations are destitute of words for the conceptions of the very commonest and most ordinary virtues;—if, even in languages of considerable cultivation, it is a matter of no slight difficulty to find a proper term for the Divine Being;—nay, more, if a language so powerful and noble, so greatly enriched from a thousand different sources as the English, had until two centuries back no word for ‘selfishness,’ the most prevalent of all human vices—is it likely that Language would be overburdened at its commencement with the demands likely to be made upon its capacity for metaphorical expression?

The word ‘selfish’ to which I have just alluded was due to an accidental flash of individual genius, and this has probably been the source of many words most valuable and astonishing in their picturesque or imaginative power. Many a poet who never sang—many an unknown demigod whose discoveries have never been recorded, has thus contributed his forgotten share to the sum of human wisdom and knowledge. There must have been hundreds of tentative words,

maintaining side by side a precarious life in the struggle for existence, before the vitality of those that deserved permanence could be fully tested. We have seen already that every sound produces an impression which admits of *manifold* forms of vocal expression ; and it is still more true that all those phenomena which were incapable of *direct* vocal representation, admitted of many different names because they might be regarded in a thousand different aspects, and furnished a thousand different characteristics. Many of these characteristics must have been simultaneously seized upon as marks of the conception before any one of them was finally chosen. Never perhaps was there a higher scope for heaven-born genius than that which was offered to men before the plasticity of language had been moulded by writing and literature into rigid, determinate, and intractable forms.

As an instance of the different points of view from which the same thing could be regarded, let us take the word 'left.' In the Polynesian languages it means '*South*,' because the Islanders turn to the *west* to find the cardinal points ; yet in Latin 'læva' is used for the *East*, and in Greek ἀγιστερά is used for the *West*, because in taking omens the Greek augur turned to the North, and the Roman to the South ; and in the Semitic languages again, from the custom of turning to the East for devotion, 'left' means *North*. Hence 'left' has been used among different nations *for every one of the four points of the compass*.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, still more strange to find the *same* root not only used for *different* notions, but actually applied to things which are *essentially contradictory*. Thus in Chinese *louan*

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<sup>1</sup> See Garnett's *Essays*, p. 287. Hundreds of instances might be given where the shades of meaning acquired by the same word in different languages have been widely different from each other. Thus the root *wilwan* 'to plunder' furnishes both the Latin *Vulpes*, and the German *Wolf*. The German *Stuhl* means a stool ; the Russian *stol* a table. The German *Zaun* means 'a hedge,' and is the same word as our 'town,' &c. Benloew, *Sur les Noms de Nombre*, p. 85.

means both 'to make a disturbance,' and 'to govern well;' *ton* is both 'to poison' and 'to nourish;' *kon* is both a worm-eaten vessel, and 'to mend a vessel;' *tsing* 'pure,' 'clean,' is used for 'a sink.'<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew <sup>2</sup> ברא means both 'he created' and 'he destroyed;' ברך means both he 'blessed' and 'cursed;' הלל means both 'to shine' (Job xxix. 3) and to be inglorious (Ps. lxxv. 5); חסד is used for both reproach and kindness; כסל both for infidelity and for constancy; קדש is applied both to the holiest and the most contaminated things; תאב implies both longing and abhorrence. The Hebrew root אבה to be willing means in Arabic to be unwilling; one word in Arabic means both to be kindled and to be extinguished, and the same root is used for to be righteous and to be unjust. In Sanskrit *bhīruka* means both timid and formidable. We find similar contradictoriness in the applications of the Greek <sup>3</sup> roots which occur in ἄγος, χεῖρα, ἄπρω, &c., the Latin words *carus*, *sacer*, &c., the English *fast*, *dear*, &c. Thus too in Greek the prefix ἀ is sometimes negative, sometimes copulative or perhaps intensive; and in German the inseparable prepositions *ent-* and *ver-* sometimes express negation and sometimes not. The explanation of the phenomenon is to be found in the Law of Association of ideas, and the harmony of the apparent discord is generally discoverable in the history of the word itself. In some cases the word or root which has acquired opposite senses was really a μίση λείξις; like the Hebrew *Barak* involving the notion of a solemn address to God, and therefore equally applicable to blessing and cursing; or the Latin 'sacer' which means set apart or tabooed, and therefore is equally applicable to things sacred and things accursed.

But in other cases of contradictory roots the explanation lies in the fact that Association works often by contrasts,

<sup>1</sup> Premare, *Not. Ling. Sin.* p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> Glass. *Philol. Sacr.* p. 746. Gesenius, *Thesaur.* s. v. נָכַר.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Donaldson, *New Cratyl.* p. 80.

and a thing recalls its opposite, and therefore at once suggests that use should be made of the same *name*. For 'the number of things<sup>1</sup> known to us, and of which we desire to speak, multiply faster than the names for them. Except on subjects for which there has been constructed a scientific terminology, with which unscientific persons do not meddle, *great difficulty is generally found in bringing a new name into use*; and independently of that difficulty it is natural to prefer giving to a new object a name which at least expresses its resemblance [or contrast] to something already known, since by predicating of it a name entirely new, we convey no information. . . . The more rapid growth of ideas than of names thus creates a perpetual necessity for making the same names serve, even if imperfectly, on a greater number of occasions.' In this principle we find the explanation of the contradictory application of roots; it becomes easy to understand why in Hebrew (in which language the most striking instances of the fact are supplied) חָטָא means 'to sin,' and חָטָא 'to expiate sin'; שָׂרַשׁ 'to root up,' and שָׁרַשׁ 'to take root.'

The ancient philosophers and grammarians singularly mistook this principle of nomenclature, which they called *κατ' ἐναντιώσιν* or the naming by opposites. Nothing can be more confused than their method of treating it, and this perhaps arises from their utter and necessary ignorance of the Science of Etymology. Observing that in some rare and extreme cases Euphemism,<sup>2</sup> the use of pleasing and well-omened words, passed into Antiphrasis, the denomination of things positively harmful by beneficent names (as in 'the gentle ones' for the Furies, and 'the better' or 'the well-named' for the left hand), they carried the same principle into ordinary words, and were content to derive *lucus*

<sup>1</sup> Mill's *Logic*, i. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Probably, however, neither Manes nor Parcae, though so often adduced, are instances of Euphemism. Of this subject we shall treat further on.

'a grove' a *non lucendo*, from its excluding the light ; ' *coelum* 'the heaven' from *celatum* 'concealed,' because it was open ; *bellum* 'war' from *bellum* beautiful, 'quod sit minime bellum ;' *aridum* 'dry' from ἀρδεύειν 'to water,'<sup>1</sup> because it had ceased to be watered,<sup>2</sup> &c. ! These absurdities are pardonable enough in Varro, Donatus, or Charisius, but it is strange that they should have been repeated for so many centuries. It is quite true that Irony, preventing any possibility of error by a change of tone, often contemptuously pronounces the opposite of what it intends, as when Micaiah the son of Imlah says to Ahab, 'Go up to Ramoth-Gilead and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king,' or as when the indignant Ida exclaims—

You have done well,  
And like a prince and like a gentleman.

And sometimes the feeblest and most meaningless kind of Irony confines itself to a single word, as when a dwarf is nicknamed Atlas, or a very ugly woman is called Venus. But it may safely be asserted that no such preposterous and pointless process as this could ever have been deliberately adopted as a method of providing words. *Many* instances can be adduced in which the relation of contrast has led to the adoption of the same root to express, under slight modifications, opposite conceptions ; but this differs entirely from the ancient notion of Antiphrasis, or a deliberate calling of things after properties which they do *not* possess—an erroneous notion which may be finally banished from the list of linguistic processes.

Proclus, in his commentary on Plato's *Cratylus*,<sup>3</sup> gives a *catalogue raisonné* of some fifteen methods for forming words,

<sup>1</sup> *Lucus* is another form of *locus*, and originally means a *clearance in a grove*, which explains its connection with *lux*. The derivations of *coelum* and *bellum* are obvious.

<sup>2</sup> Lersch, *Sprachphil.* iii. 133. Lobeck has written one of his exhaustive papers *De Antiphrasi et Euphemismo*.

<sup>3</sup> P. 44. Quoted by Lersch, iii. 94.

as for instance—1. by imitation (*κατὰ μίμνησιν*), as to *hiss* (*σίζω*); 2. by reference to something else, or analogy; 3. by catachresis, the recognised misapplication of a word, as when we say that a sound is sweet; 4. pseudonymously, i.e. with a disregard of the etymological meaning, as when we talk of a *silver box*, or a *brass locking-glass*; 5. with a reference to history, as *ὀβολός* an obol, from *βέλος* an ingot; 6. by an extension of meaning (*ἐπιδιατετακίτα*), as *ζωγράφος*, properly a painter of *animals*, to a painter of any other objects; 7. hyperbolically, as when we talk of a man's *having no heart*; 8. euphemistically, as when we call the Furies 'gentle ones'; 9. analogically, as when we talk of the *head* of a mountain, or the *leg* of a table; 10. from resemblance, as when we say that a man's frame of mind was crude and bitter; 11. by slight modification of existing words; 12. elliptically, as *τράπεζα* for *τετράπεζα*; 13. from discoverers, as when we call wine 'Bacchus'; 14. from things invented, as when we call Vulcan 'fire'; 15. by excess (*καθ' ὑπεροχήν*), as when we call a cask 'a tile' (*κέραμος*), and a physician 'a surgeon' (*χειρουργός*); and to these he might have added many others—for instance, by synecdoche, as when we speak of 'a thousand *head* of cattle.'

There is very little value in this enumeration of Proclus's, for a cursory examination<sup>1</sup> shows that all the processes which he has separated, naturally fall under the three heads of—1. Imitation, 2. Metaphor, and 3. Antiphrasis—with the exception of one or two (e.g. 11. by modification, and 12. by ellipse) which belong to formal etymology, and need no explanation, or further remark. His allusion, however, to the *Historical* origin of words (under which head fall 13. and 14. in the above list) is new and important, and on it is based the whole of that beautiful and valuable Science which has received of late the title of Linguistic Palæontology.

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<sup>1</sup> Lersch, iii. 95.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE NATURE OF WORDS.

Λόγος βάθυσ καὶ ἀπόρρητος ὁ περὶ φύσεως ὀνομάτων.

ORIG. *c. Cels.* i. 24.

WE have now advanced sufficiently far in our enquiry to be able to estimate more accurately the nature and import of Words.

It was the endeavour to arrive at some secure conclusion upon this subject which led to the constant and eager controversies on the origin of Language which occupied some of the clearest intellects among the Greeks and Romans. In the hands of the Grammarians the question degenerated from the high philosophical import which it had in the minds of the ancient Philosophers ; but in one form or other, with numberless modifications, it was a problem which occupied a thousand years of thought and argument. It is the one thread which, under various colours, runs through the whole history of Greek philology<sup>1</sup> from its dawn in the loftiest regions of metaphysical speculation to its decline into a dry and dusty register of grammatical forms and dialectic varieties.

The nomenclature of the controversy, and with it the views of the combatants, shifted continually from age to age ; but amidst a crowd of differing terms the main fundamental question always was this—Did words originate by Nature (φύσις) or by Convention (θεσις, συνθηκὴ)? Was their

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<sup>1</sup> Lersch, *Die Sprachphil. d. Allen*, s. 2.



form and significance determined by some inward necessity, or by mere arbitrary caprice? Have words any abstract propriety and fitness (*ὁρθότης*), or are they merely invented anyhow and at haphazard? Is there in words any intrinsic force and meaning, or are they mere accidental labels stuck upon things which we wish to mention? Is there any connection between names and things, or are names mere artificial counters used to assist our mental calculations?

Those who decided in favour of the first of these hypotheses—those who held that names existed by nature, and had a necessary and mystic connection with the things they signified—were called Analogists;—those who regarded words as mere conventional signs of our conceptions were called Anomalists.

It was to be expected that the discussion of a subject which the Ancients had no means of deciding, and the use of watchwords and party cries<sup>1</sup> capable of such widely different acceptations as *Φύσις* and *Νόμος*, would lead to infinite confusions of thought, and would render it difficult in many cases to decide to which school any particular thinker really belonged. Moreover, our materials for forming an opinion of what was really held by the great thinkers in the Golden Age of Greek Philosophy, are often to be derived from prolix commentators and puzzle-headed scholiasts. Heraclitus and Democritus were at opposite poles, yet if Democritus called words ‘sounding images’ (*ἀγάλματα φωνήεντα*) he used a phrase which Heraclitus himself might readily have adopted. Pythagoras is distinctly classed by Proclus among the Analogists, and by Ammonius no less clearly among the Anomalists. Epicurus, and his glorious exponent Lucretius, attack Pythagoras<sup>2</sup> for

<sup>1</sup> ‘So wirken Schlagwörter allemal um so weiter, je weniger sie verstanden werden; und die Parteien zerfallen sobald sie sich ihr Schlagwort klar machen wollen!’ Steinthal, *Grammatik*, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> On this subject see Lersch, i. p. 25; Steinthal, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft*, pp. 150–176. Lersch’s book derives immense value from its rich collection of quotations from all the ancient philosophers

believing in a Namegiver, and attribute language to the instincts of nature sharpened by the spur of necessity; yet nothing can be more clear than that their views were utterly at variance with the mystical conceptions of many other eminent Analogists. In Plato's great dialogue, the *Cratylus*, where this subject is treated, the difficulty of arriving at any clear conception of the view propounded is so great, that no two commentators have ever been found to agree in the exact interpretation of it. Instead therefore of entering into this war of words, and labyrinth of indistinct conceptions, it will be sufficient to contrast the assertions of one or two of the chief supporters of both schools, and see how far they contain any germ of truth; for the problem, baldly stated, 'Is Language due to Nature or to Convention?' is very nearly meaningless, and has no value as an intelligible formula. For convention requires discussion, agreement, concert; and as these are impossible *without* Language, we are at once involved in a vicious circle.<sup>1</sup> The controversy had its root (as we see very distinctly from the *Cratylus*) in the opposition between the Ionic and Eleatic Schools of Physiology,<sup>2</sup> of which the former maintained the perpetual flux (*πάντα ῥεῖ*), and the latter the stability and reality of all things. In its ultimate consequences and developments it involves many of the most important questions in Theology, in Philosophy, and even in Science. But we need go no farther than the *Cratylus* to learn that there is in Language *both* a natural and a conventional element, and that (if we *must* use abstractions) both the human understanding, and that mysterious entity 'the nature of things,' contributed their respective quotas to the Laws and Forms of speech.

Heraclitus, the very prince of all ancient philosophers, may

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and grammarians; but it is eminently bewildering, and deficient in clearness and critical power. See Steinthal, *Gesch.* p. 75.

<sup>1</sup> See Herbart, *Psychol.* § 130, quoted by Steinthal, *Grammatik*, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Lersch, i. 10.

be regarded as the father and founder of the Analogists. He held (if we may accept the flickering lamp of Ammonius as adequate to illuminate his proverbial darkness<sup>1</sup>), that Names were the immediate product of a Natural power which assigned to each thing its proper designation as a necessary element of that thing's existence—the relation between the two being similar to that which exists between a sensation and the object which causes it.<sup>2</sup> Names, he thought, were like the *natural*, not like the artificial, images of visible things, i.e. they resembled the shadows cast by solid objects, or the reflections in mirrors and on the surface of still water. 'Those who use the true word do really and truly *name* the object, while those who do not, merely make an unintelligent noise. Hence the philosopher's object is to discover the *true names* which nature has assigned to things, just as it is the part of a keen observer to distinguish accurately the appearances of objects.'<sup>3</sup> Nothing then can be clearer than that Heraclitus here enunciates the most absolute views of the Analogist school—that Words are the immediate copies of Things, produced by Nature herself, not due to any subjective influence of human caprice, but corresponding to Realities by an objective necessity. On this subject we shall have more to say hereafter. The Analogism of Epicurus was of a very different character; he too held that Words were a natural product, but by 'Nature' he only meant a physical organic necessity—which is a very low and onesided view of Language, even when invested with poetic colours in the orgiastic and splendid verse of Lucretius, or

<sup>1</sup> 'Ο Σκοτεινός was his name even among the ancients; yet the fragments of him which have come down to us are luminous, nay radiant, with thought and meaning. His alleged obscurity, like that of Bishop Butler, must simply have arisen from the novelty and profundity of his speculations, not from any defects of expression or any intellectual vagueness.

<sup>2</sup> Such, we suppose, must be the meaning of the sentence, ὥσπερ αἰσθησὼν ἄλλην ἐπὶ ἄλλοις τῶν αἰσθητῶν ὁρῶμεν τεταγμένην. Ammonius, *ad* Arist. *de Interpr.* p. 24, in Lersch, i. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ammonius, l. c.

arrayed in some shadow of scientific authority in more modern writers.<sup>1</sup>

Democritus, that Fichte of the ancients, held an opinion the direct reverse of that propounded by Heraclitus. He referred everything to opinion, and custom;—with him even the experience of the Senses<sup>2</sup> was but a reflex of established prejudices, and Speech the mere result of arbitrary human agreement! Nay, he not only asserted this, but he tried, according to Proclus,<sup>3</sup> to prove it by four philological arguments; viz. 1. By the existence of Homonyms, or identical words for different objects, as, for instance, *κλείς* to mean both a key and a collarbone; 2. By Polyonymy, or the existence of different synonyms for the same object, as *ἄνθρωπος*, *μέροψ*, and *βροτός*, for ‘man;’ 3. By the possibility of changing a proper name; for if names corresponded to some inward characteristic, we could not change a man’s name<sup>4</sup> from Aristocles to Plato, or from Tyrannion to Theophrastus; 4. By the accidental absence of some words formed analogously to others; e.g. we have *φρονεῖν* from *φρόνησις*, but no similar verb from *δικαιοσύνη*. Few Heracliteans, we suppose, would be appalled by the production of such raw arguments as these, even when they received a practical illustration from the Megarian Diodorus, who called one of his slaves ‘But in truth’ (*ἀλλὰ μὲν*), and another by some other conjunction, to show that in Language Use is the only important principle, and that no word has any other meaning than the one which you may choose to attach to it! Still, the Analogists had equally little in the way of argument to produce on their own side. Heraclitus held that the Study of Words was a direct road to the discovery

<sup>1</sup> E.g. in Becker’s *Organism. der Sprache*.

<sup>2</sup> νόμῳ γλυκύ, νόμῳ πικρόν, νόμῳ θερμόν, νόμῳ ψυχρόν, νόμῳ χροῖη. Democr. *de Anim.* Vide Lersch, i. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Proclus, *Schol. in Plat. Cratylus*, p. 6. Id.

<sup>4</sup> Hermogenes in Plato’s *Cratylus* illustrates this by the constant changing of *slaves’* names. *Cratyl.* p. 384.

of abstract truth,<sup>1</sup> but there is little enough of truth, abstract or otherwise, in the Etymologies which occupied the attention of his followers ; and as for the attempts of the grammarian Nigidius<sup>2</sup> to support them by arguing that when we say the word *Vos* we indicate by the movement and protrusion of the lips the persons to whom we are speaking, whereas when we say *Nos* we draw in the breath and the lips—the less we say about them the better ! They belong to an infinitely worse form of hypothesis than that already quoted from St. Augustine ; they are far more futile than the attempts which have amused so many writers, from Plato down to Dr. Wienbarg and Mr. D'Arcy Thompson, to discover the distinct psychology and physiognomy of particular alphabetic letters.<sup>3</sup>

But the Analogists were less guided by definite arguments than by deep mysterious convictions. They appealed to the names of the gods, as being peculiar and appropriate, because they were felt to be too sacred to admit of being changed.<sup>4</sup> They called attention to the effects of blessing and cursing, which, they argued, could not be mere arbitrary words, because they often worked their own achievement, and possessed an inherent power,<sup>5</sup> which proves that Speech binds together God and man, heaven and earth, words and things, in a common band of thought.

<sup>1</sup> Ἐξαιρετόν φασι τοῦ Ἡρακλείτου διδασκαλείου τὴν διὰ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν ὁδόν. Proclus in *Parmenid.* i. 12. 'Qui imagines rerum in verbis sic ut in cerâ expressas putarent.' Lobeck, *Aglaopham.* ii. 871.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Aul. Gellius, x. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Every one knows what Plato makes out of the letters R and L. *Cratylus*, p. 424 *seqq.* Moritz Drechsler occupied an entire book with the letter M (*Grundlegung zur wissenschaftlichen Konstruktion*, &c. Erlangen, 1830) ; and in Mr. D. Thompson's *Day-dreams of a School-master* we find traced the villanous lineaments and character of the letter K. Dr. Wienbarg in his curious little book, *Das Geheimniss des Wortes*, p. iv., says that he has listened diligently to 'the sylphlike waving and whispering of the letter-spirits.'

<sup>4</sup> Iambl. *de Mysteriis*, vii. 5. Lersch, i. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Ammonius. *Id. ib.*

The very universality of such views as these among nations in the most various stages of culture, and men of the most different capacities—the fact that they have been held alike by Jews and Gentiles, by savages and philosophers, by the abjectly superstitious and the profoundly learned—shows that they must rest upon some principle, or at any rate must deserve a careful examination. It must not be supposed that the enquiry has now become a mere meaningless anachronism. On the contrary, it lies at the root of many widely-reaching controversies. On it, for instance, ultimately turns the long dispute between the Realists and the Nominalists. St. Anselm declared that unless the abstract man were a reality, unless man, the idea which objectively corresponds to the word ‘man,’ had an actual independent existence,<sup>1</sup> the doctrine of the Incarnation could not be true. On the other hand, Fichte’s singularly crude and unconditional acceptance of the theory which deprived names of all but a purely conventional value,<sup>2</sup> was a direct result of his subjective idealism. To this day the disputes which gather round the meanings of general terms both in Science and Theology are largely modified by the influence of some, often unconscious, theory respecting the nature of words.

It is then very important to try and illustrate what the most advanced Analogists held on this subject, and thereby to arrive at some point from which we can criticise their opinions.

The early Jews seem to have held the views of the Analogists in their extremest form. We do not indeed find the doctrine stated by them in so many words, the nearest approach to such a statement being a verse of questionable authenticity in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xvii. 5), ‘in the sixth place he imparted them Understanding, and in the seventh Speech an interpreter of the cogitations thereof,’

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<sup>1</sup> Hampden, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> *Von der Sprachfähigkeit, Sämmtl. Werken*, 8. Heyse, s. 57.

where Language is described as a divinely-created sense. But we find throughout the Bible so vast an importance attached to the mere physiological quality of certain sounds—so solemn a method of inference from mere names and words—as to leave no doubt respecting the views which suggested such a method of enquiry and illustration. No doubt the constant Paronomasiæ or plays on words which occur in the sacred writers may be due in part to the pleasure which all people, and the Orientals especially, seem to derive from the assonance of different parts of a sentence<sup>1</sup>—a pleasure which, combined with the tendency to Pleonasm found in all early tongues, lies at the bottom of that whole system of Parallelism in which Hebrew poetry consists. But as similar alliterations and Paronomasiæ are most frequent at that *earliest* stage of language when the meaning of words is freshest, brightest, and least conventional, we must consider them as partly due to some vague belief in the inherent affinities of words. Thus in the very second verse of Genesis we find the words *Tohoo vabohoo* as a description of the primal chaos; and similar instances may be found in Job xxx. 19, Is. liv. 8, Ps. xviii.<sup>2</sup> &c.,

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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic names Harut and Marut, Abel and Kabel (Cain and Abel), Dalut and G'ialut (David and Goliath); compare Kophy and Mophy in Herod. &c. In the Bible we have Huz and Buz, &c. A Hindoo constantly adds meaningless rhymes even to English words, and will talk of a button-bitten, kettle-bittley, &c. But a sort of *παρήχησις* is used, and used with admirable effect by the very best writers, as in the New Testament, *πορεύεσθαι πορνείᾳ, φθόνου φόνοι* (Rom. i. 29, 31), *ἀσυνέτως ἀσυνθέτως, κρίνεις κατακρίνεις*, &c.; in the Prayer-book holy, wholly, giving and forgiving, changes and chances, &c. These assonances, which are common in Cicero and Sallust, are the *special* delight of St. Augustine. In poetry too they are frequent:—*ἀσχύνομαι ἀλγύνομαι*, Eur. Apprehends and comprehends, Shaksp. *Mids. Night's Dream*. Sorted and consorted, *Love's Lab. Lost*. 'Sly slow hours,' *Rom. and Jul.* 'Is every breath, a death,' *All's well*, &c. 'Actions and exactions,' Daniel. 'Fear the fierceness of the boy,' *Beaum. and Fletch.* 'Shrill, chill with flakes of foam,' &c., Tennyson. To enter fully into this subject would be to write a book on Rhyme, its origin, the source of its pleasurable, &c.

<sup>2</sup> See Glass. *Philol. Sacr.* p. 951.

degenerating in Judg. xv. 16, and in the apocryphal story of Susannah, into mere puns,<sup>1</sup> and rising in Is. v. 7 into very beautiful and pathetic force. Perhaps the best instance to prove that a distinct importance was attached to the mere sound is to be found in the vision of Jer. i. 11, 12, where the Lord says, 'Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an *almond tree*. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will *hasten* my word to perform it.' In this remarkable passage it is clear that the symbolic vision derives no small part of its force, if not its whole basis, from the similar sound and derivation of the two words *Shakeed* 'an almond tree,' and *Shâkad* 'to hasten.' Even this, strange as it may seem to us, is not a singular instance. In Amos (viii. 1, 2)—'Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer *fruit*. Then said the Lord unto me, The *end* is come upon my people,'—an important clue to the meaning lies in the similarity between *Kaytz*, 'fruit,' and *Kêhtz*, 'an end,' both which words have the imitative origin *Kâtsatz* 'to cut' (cf. Ezek. vii. 6). Even in Dan. v. 28 there is evidently a play on Peres and the Hebrew *Pârâs* a Persian; and, to take an instance still more important, the title Nazarene, as given to our Lord, and referred to by St. Matthew as having fulfilled an ancient prophecy, seems to find its sole explanation in the similarity of the word Nazarene to *Netzer* 'a branch,' a title given to our Lord in Is. xi. 1. It seems nearly certain, if I may quote what I have said elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> that 'St. Matthew, well aware of the importance attached by Orientals generally, and the sacred writers in particular, to the mere quantity of certain sounds as connecting them with other sounds expressive of different conceptions, . . . may have been led to

<sup>1</sup> In the story of Susannah the pun rests on the similarity of *σχιῖνος* a mastick-tree, and *σχιῶαι* to cleanse; *πρίνος* a holm-oak, and *πρίσαι* to saw asunder; Luther admirably renders the pun by the words *Linden jnden*, and *Eichen, zeichen*.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible*, s. v. *Riddle*, where numerous other instances are given, the number of which might easily be doubled.



suppose that this passage in Isaiah bore out his general reference to the prophets, and indicated the fact which he narrates.' It is extremely probable that by bearing these views of language in mind we may throw great light on St. Paul's difficult expression, 'For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia'—since Agar means a rock, and was probably a local name for the Arabian mountain.

It is however in the method of treating proper names that the belief in their absolute significance is most clearly shown. 'The Jews seem to have held to the full that *'imago animi, vitæ, vultûs nomen est.'* 'The name was, according to Hebrew and Eastern writers in general, an integral part of the object itself; it was not deemed indifferent; it was no conventional sign; it was an essential attribute.'<sup>1</sup> Hence we have *no less than fifty* etymologies in the Book of Genesis alone, and in almost every one of these instances the derivation connects the name, prophetically or otherwise, with some event in the person's life. It would however be an error to regard these as always meant for *mere* etymologies; indeed as such they are in many cases scientifically untenable. Even in Gen. ii. 23, *Issah* 'woman' *cannot* be derived from *Eesh*<sup>2</sup> 'man'; nor can Noah be derived from *Nâcham* 'to comfort' in Gen. v. 29; nor again, since Moses is an *Egyptian* name (Ex. ii. 10, cf. Gen. xli. 45), can it be possibly derived from the Hebrew *Mâshah* 'he saved.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch, *Genesis*, p. 114. Hiller, *Onomasticon*, p. 950. Ewald, *Proph. d. alten Bundes*, i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 'The similarity of the sound only could have been alluded to, and by no means the derivation of the word.' Mason and Bernard, *Hebr. Gram.* i. 122. See, however, on the other side, Ewald, *Hebr. Gram.* i. 318; Kalisch, *Genesis*, p. 116. Gesenius (*Thes.* i. 87) says that the derivation, 'quamvis non satis accurata, tamen scriptori sacro notatu digna videbatur.'

<sup>3</sup> Accordingly Josephus says (*Antt.* ii. 9, 6), τὸ γὰρ ὕδωρ μὲν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καλοῦσιν, ὕσῃς δὲ τοὺς ἐξ ὕδατος σωθέντας. On Noah, Mr. J. Perowne says, 'It is quite plain that the name "rest" and the verb "comfort" are of different roots; and we must not try to make a philologist of Lamech, and suppose that he was giving an accurate

These instances, and they might be largely multiplied, show that in many cases the inferences drawn from names in the Bible are not intended as *etymologies*, but are adduced to illustrate the mystic relations of words, and to represent certain facts and influences in the lives of those who bore them. For to the Oriental every word appeared to have in itself a divine primeval character, and to retain some fragment of the creative breath.<sup>1</sup> It is well worth our enquiry whether there is not a still earlier instance of this view in the explanation of the name Adam? To suppose that it is derived from *Adamah* 'earth' is philologically difficult, if not impossible; and both words are probably connected with *adam* 'he was red'<sup>2</sup>—red being the colour by which the Semitic race is depicted on the Egyptian monuments. We may then accept Gen. ii. 7 as one of those instances in which the name serves to remind the writer of some cognate or similar word,<sup>3</sup> which naturally suggested the same conclusion as that drawn by the Greeks from the similarity of *λᾶα*; 'a stone,' and *λαός* 'people,'<sup>4</sup> and by the Romans from the resemblance of 'homo' and 'humus.' In this way at any

derivation of the name Noah. He merely plays upon the name after a fashion common enough in all ages and countries.' *Dict. of the Bible*, s. v.

<sup>1</sup> Wienbarg, *Das Geheimniss des Wortes*, p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> See Jos. *Antt.* i. 1, 2; Leuden, *Onomast.* s. v. *Adam*. The Indians have a tradition that man was made out of red clay; the Chinese say that it was yellow clay.

<sup>3</sup> This mode of treating words is not uncommon; many etymologies of the ancients which sound so absurd to us were not always meant for 'etymologies' in the strict sense, but for allegorical interpretations, or sometimes even for a mere *memoria technica*:—as when the Roman Jurisconsults derive 'mutuus' '*quod ex meo tuum fiat*,' and *testamentum* from *testatio mentis*; or as when the Fathers connect 'Paschal' and *πάσχειν*, or the Pythagoreans forbade the use of peas and beans (*λάθυροι*, *ἐρέβινθοι*) because they were *λήθης καὶ ἐρέβους παρώνυμα*; or the Stoics derive *θυμιάμα* from *θυμοῦ ἵαμα*, and Solæcism from *σόου λόγου αἰκισμὸν*, &c. Lobeck, *Aglaopham.* p. 869.

<sup>4</sup> There is possibly an allusion to this in Homer's play upon *λαούς* and *λίθους*. Comp. Pind. *O.* ix. 66.

rate we remove, for those who feel it, the difficulty (!) arising from the fact that the ultimate constituents of man's body are *not* dust and clay, but albumen, phosphate of lime, fat, hæmatin, and many chemical ingredients.

There are fifty of these allusive applications of names in the Book of Genesis alone, and the instances of Isaac, Jacob, Seth, Esau, Edom, Judah, Gad, Dan, Peleg, Shem, Japheth, will at once occur to the reader's mind. In some instances, as those of Eve, Abel, Noah, Nabal, Solomon, the name was clearly supposed to have a prophetic character.<sup>1</sup> Even in the New Testament we find our Lord himself in a solemn moment fixing on the mind of his greatest Apostle a new and solemn significance given to the name he bore. 'Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church.'<sup>2</sup> St. Paul also is probably playing upon a name when, in Phil. iv. 3, he affectionately addresses a friend as γυνεὶ Σύζυγε, 'true yokefellow'—since it is an ancient and very probable supposition that Syzygus or Yokefellow is there a proper name.

So deep was the sacredness attached to names that the great ebbs and flows in the tide of Jewish thought<sup>3</sup> may be

<sup>1</sup> The ancients noticed the same fact in the name Hippolytus, &c.

'Protesilaë, tibi nomen sic fata dederunt,  
Victima quod Trojæ prima futurus eras.  
Idmona quod vatem, medicum quod Iapida dicunt,  
Discendas artes nomina praeveniunt.' Auson. *Ep.* xx.

<sup>2</sup> 'Among the Hebrews even *anagrams* formed a part of the cabbalistic science, and afforded a clue to the discovery of those mysterious oracles which it was imagined the Almighty in his wisdom had connected with the giving of proper names.' Salverte, i. 12. One or two astonishing instances (Sheshach, &c.) from the two modes of interpretation called Athbash and Grammateia might be adduced. The belief in the significance of anagrams lasted till a very late period. The series of miracles connected with the 'garnet ears' of wheat were suggested from the fact that the letters of Pater Henricus Garnetius (hanged for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, 1606) form the words 'pingere cruentus aristâ.'

<sup>3</sup> See Ewald's article on Names in Kitto's *Cyclop.*

traced by a diligent study of the names they adopted. Hence too their practice, under certain grave conditions, of changing men's names—a practice which is strikingly illustrated in the histories of Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Benjamin, Joshua, and Gideon. 'Call me not Naomi (pleasant), but Mara (bitter),' said the broken-hearted widow of Elimelech. In later times we find the name of Pashur indignantly changed by Jeremiah into Magor-missabib, i.e. 'terror on every side' (Jer. xx. 3-10), but no ingenuity has yet been able decisively to state why the name of Saul of Tarsus was, after his conversion, changed to Paul.

In one of the Chaldean oracles of Zoroaster we find the rule—

'Ὄνόματα βάρβαρα μὴ ποτ' ἀλλάξης,  
εἰσι γὰρ ὀνόματα πάρ' ἐκάστοις θεόδοτα  
δύναμιν ἐν τελεταῖς ἄρρητον ἔχοντα.<sup>1</sup>

The Jews, however, did not share this reverence for barbarous or foreign names; on the contrary, their 'contumelia numinum'<sup>2</sup> was proverbial among the ancients and made them deeply unpopular. This was why they changed Bethel 'the house of God' into Bethaven 'the house of vanity;' Beelzebul 'Lord of heaven' into Beelzebub 'the Lord of filth;' Kir Heres 'the city of the Sun' into Kir Cheres 'the city of destruction;' Har Hamischah 'the mount of olives' into Har Hamaschith 'the mount of corruption;'<sup>3</sup> Jerubbaal and Meribbaal into Jerubbesheth and Mephibosheth, where *Baal* 'Lord' is altered into *Bosheth* 'shame.' This custom may very possibly have been confirmed in the Jews by a literal acceptance of Exod. xxiii. 13, 'Make *no mention* of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.' It was however equally common in the case of men; thus Achan was changed to Achor or 'trouble,'

<sup>1</sup> Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. xiii. 9. Winer, *Bibl. Realwörterb.* s. v. *Götteslasterung*.

<sup>3</sup> Selden, *De Diis Syr. Syntagm.* 2, p. 211. I am aware that nearly all these instances are strongly disputed.

and the impostor Barchocebas 'the son of a star' was called Barchozibas 'the son of a lie.'<sup>1</sup>

Much of this notion respecting the intrinsic significance of names<sup>2</sup> rose from the belief that language was divinely inspired, and the result of Adam's incomparable wisdom. According to the Cabbalists Adam was taught by the Angel Raziel, and received a celestial alphabet; according to others his teacher was a certain Somboscer. Clemens Alexandrinus<sup>3</sup> distinctly attributes his power of naming the animals to a prophetic gift, and St. Chrysostom<sup>4</sup> took it as a proof of consummate intelligence. The phrase 'that was the name thereof' implied, says Eusebius,<sup>5</sup> that the name had an intrinsic and natural meaning. 'God called the light day, and the darkness he called night,' says Theophilus,<sup>6</sup> 'since man would not have been able to name these things, nor indeed anything else, if he had not received their designation from the God who created them.' The same views are still held by many, perhaps by the majority. 'Adam,' says South in his sermon on the State of Man before the Fall, 'came into the world a philosopher, which sufficiently appears *by his writing the nature of things upon their names.*' It is a curious and significant fact that we find the very same conception among the Chinese, who say that Fohi performed his duty of nomenclature so well 'that by naming the things their very nature was made known.'<sup>7</sup>

All that we have said about the Jews finds its parallel in the literature of the Greeks and Romans. All the Epic

<sup>1</sup> Salverte (*History of Names*, p. 12, ed. Mordacque) gives a Persian instance.

<sup>2</sup> Philo speaks of the *natural* power of words. See Bochart, *Hierozoi-con*, vol. i. p. 58; Heidegger, *Hist. Patr.* p. 37, &c. Some of the views of the Rabbi and Fathers are quoted by Michaeler, *De Orig. Linguae*, pp. 167-196.

<sup>3</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* i. 335.

<sup>4</sup> Chrys. *Hom. XIV. in Gen.*

<sup>5</sup> Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* xi. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Theoph. *ad Autolyc.* ii. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Chou-king, *Dissert. Prélim.* p. 84.

poets from Homer<sup>1</sup> downwards, all the Lyric poets beginning with Pindar,<sup>2</sup> all the tragedians—the profound and majestic Æschylus no less than the tender realistic Euripides—nay even the orators,<sup>3</sup> who spoke for the people, resort to these plays on words, and especially on names as a necessary ornament of their style. No doubt with some of them it became a mere trick of rhetoric,<sup>4</sup> a mere *δοσειότης* capable of being reduced to definite rules; but with men like Homer, Pindar, and Æschylus it was regarded in a far different light. Throughout the whole of Grecian Antiquity reigned the popular belief that there existed a necessary mysterious connection between words and the objects signified by them, so that man unconsciously, as though under the guidance of a higher Power, expressed, in the words whereby he named things or persons, their innermost being and future destiny as though in a symbol incomprehensible even to himself.<sup>5</sup> If the commentators had understood this tendency they might have saved themselves their bursts of indignation against these '*putida et frigida etymologia, et tragicâ dignitate aliena.*'<sup>6</sup> We think the pun on a man's name the lowest kind of wit, but assuredly it was no intention to be witty which led Æschylus to spend

<sup>1</sup> On the name Odysseus, *Od.* i. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Pind. *Nem.* vii. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Chiefly however in jest, as Conon played on the name Thrasybulus; and Herodicus on the names Thrasymachus, and Polus, and Draco, saying that the laws of the latter were the laws of a Dragon. Herodotus (vi. 50) records the joke of Cleomenes on the name Krius (ram). Cicero is particularly full of these jokes, playing on the name Verres (boar-pig) with constant delight, as well as on the name Chrysogonus, &c. When Philippus, punning on the name Catulus, exclaimed '*Quid latras, Catule?*' the happy answer was '*Furem video.*' Quint. vi. 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Arist. *Rhet.* ii. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Schwable in Steinthal, *Gesch. d. Sprach.* s. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Such a play on words seems to have acted like a red rag on commentators, from whom a curious florilegium might be gathered of vituperative phrases against this '*ludicra dicendi ratio,*' '*illepida carminis forma,*' '*argutiæ,*' &c. Quintilian leads the way with his '*frigidum sane.*' *Instt. Or.* v. 10.

twelve bitter lines of a splendid and passionate chorus in denouncing

Sweet Helen

*Hell in her name, but heaven in her looks ;*<sup>1</sup>

nor did he imagine himself to be comic when he makes Cassandra in the mid screams of her heart-shaking prophetic frenzy play on the meanings of the names Apollo and Aguius.<sup>2</sup> Nor again would Sophocles have admitted the charge of bad taste for beginning the tragic denunciation of Pyrrhus by Philoctetes with the terrible paronomasia,

Ἦ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δέϊμα.<sup>3</sup>

In all probability both he and his predecessor believed profoundly in the science of Onomantia. 'Modern translators have often tried to apologise for what might seem an unwarrantable play upon words, but no apology was needed in a city where to commemorate the self-sacrifice and courageous heroism of Leæna the inhabitants themselves had erected the bronze figure of a lioness.' Nor, it may be added, would such a method of treating names be considered unimportant among a nation whose chiefs were persuaded to a most important military enterprise by the accidental omen in the name of an envoy who was called 'Hegesistratus' or 'leader of an army.'<sup>4</sup>

The same feelings profoundly actuated the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ελένη ἐλένας, ἑλανδρας ἐλέπτολις. Æsch. *Ag.* 689. See on this subject, Salverte, i. 37. The English lines are from Peele's *Edward I.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ag.* 1040, 1049. In Æschylus we also find these paronomasiae on Epaphus (*From.* 875), on the river Hybristes (*Id.* 742), on Io (*Id.* 718), on Prometheus (*Id.* 86), &c. Sophocles has them on Ajax, Sidero, and Polynices; Euripides on Theoclymene, Theonoe, Thoas, Meleager, Aphrodite, &c.; Theocritus on Pentheus (xxvi. 26), &c.

<sup>3</sup> Any one who wishes to see the instances collected may consult Lersch, iii. 11-17; Sturz, *Opuscc.* p. 78, *De Nominibus Græcis*; Meineke, *ad Euphor.* p. 128; Elmsley, *Bacch.* 508; Creuzer, *de Arte Hist. Græc.* p. 52; Rost, *ad Phan.* 639, &c.

<sup>4</sup> See Herod. ix. 91. Grote, v. 259.

They would all have echoed the language of Ausonius (*Ep.* xx.) :—

Nam divinare est nomen componere, quod sit  
Fortunæ, morum, vel necis indicium.

In their levies, Cicero informs us, they took care to enrol first such names as Victor, and Felix, and Faustus, and Secundus ; and were anxious to head the roll of the census with a word of such happy augury as Salvius Valerius. Cæsar gave a command in Spain to an obscure Scipio simply for the sake of the omen which his name involved. Scipio upbraids his mutinous soldiers with having followed to the field an Atrius Umber a ‘dux abominandi nominis’ (*Liv.* xxviii. 28), being, as De Quincey calls him, a ‘pleonasm of darkness.’ The Emperor Severus consoled himself on the immoralities of his Empress Julia, because she bore the same name as the profligate daughter of Augustus. To come down to later times, Adrian VI. when he became Pope wished to retain his own name, but was prevented from doing so on being informed by his cardinals that all the Popes who had done so, had died in the first year of their reign.<sup>1</sup>

In almost every other national literature, and that not in consequence of a mere desire to imitate the ancients, but from an outgrowth of the same feelings which animated them, we find examples of the same belief in the independent value of words and names. In Shakspeare the play upon names is often introduced in some of the most thrilling passages ;—as in *Cymbeline* (v. 5) :—

Thou, Leonatus, art *the lion's whelp* ;  
The fit and apt construction of thy name,  
Being *Leo-natus*, doth import so much ;

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<sup>1</sup> Mervoyer, *Ét. sur l'Assoc. d'Idées*, p. 376. As bearing on the same subject I may refer to a paper of mine on *Curious Predictions* in ‘The Museum.’



and in *King John*, Constance even in the transport of her anguish exclaims (iii. 1) :—

O lawful let it be,  
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile ;

and in *As You Like it* Claudio breaks forth with—

O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been  
If half thy outward graces had been placed  
About thy thoughts, and counsels of thy heart ;

and once more in *Richard II.*, ii. 2, John of Gaunt replies to the King's address,—

Old Gaunt indeed and gaunt in being old ; . . .  
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave  
Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones ;

upon which the King asks in surprise,—

Can sick men play so nicely with their names ?

and Gaunt gives this very striking answer :—

No ! Misery makes sport to mock herself.<sup>1</sup>

Poets of undeniable taste have continued the process<sup>2</sup> down to the most recent times. Cowper says of the poet Bloomfield—

While *fields* shall *bloom* thy name shall live ;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'God forgive me for making such bad puns,' writes Sir W. Napier in one of his indignant letters, 'but a bitter feeling sometimes turns to humour to avoid cursing.' *Life of Sir W. Napier*, ii. 241.

<sup>2</sup> All our earlier and Elizabethan writers supply similar instances. Thus in the comedy of *Patient Grissel* we have Furio thus addressed :—

'When thou com'st to her rough and furious  
I pray thee on thy life be *like thy name* ;'

and in Decker—

'Thy name is *Angelo*,  
And like that name thou art.'

<sup>3</sup> He has a similar play on the name *Edgeworth*.

and even Wordsworth begins his touching lines to the memory of Charles Lamb with the allusion—

From the most gentle creature born in fields  
Had been derived the name he bore—a name  
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence.

The changes of name for purposes of scorn, compliment, or memorial are also common in all periods of history. The Athenians were christened by their enemies Gapenians (Κεχηνάϊν); Demosthenes sneers at Æschines for changing Tromes and Empusa, his parents' names, into Atrometus and Glaucothea; Chrysippus received the contemptuous appellation Chesippus; Antiochus Epiphanes was changed by the angry Jews into Epimanes; Tiberius Claudius Nero from his drunkenness was nicknamed Biberius Caldius Mero; Ætius, not without a reference to his name, was called "Ἀθεός,"<sup>1</sup> and the Arians were nicknamed Ariomanites. Jerome changed the name of his adversary Vigilantius into Dormitantius; the original name of Servius II. was *Groin*, and this was the reason why he first of those who assumed the tiara changed his name; Louis XI. altered the name of his barber Olivier le Diable, first into Olivier le Mauvais, then to O. le Malin, and then into O. le Daim, and by a public decree forbade either of his former names to be mentioned;<sup>2</sup> Maria Theresa, on the other hand, called her minister Thunichtgut by the much more promising title of Thugut. Salverte tells a story of a Delaware chief who, being accustomed only to names that had a *real* reference, asked the meaning of Colonel Sprout's name. 'The colonel was a man of remarkable size. The chief was told that the name meant "a shoot." "No," he said, "*he cannot be the shoot, he is the tree itself.*"' He could not conceive the existence of a name which was not significant.

<sup>1</sup> Gieseler, *Church History*, i. 329, *Engl. tr.*

<sup>2</sup> P. Mervoyer, *Ét. sur l'Association d'Idées*, p. 377.

The universal prevalence of Euphemism as a principle of language is due to a belief in the mystic power of words to work their own fulfilment, as one of the laws of destiny.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to refer to the familiar instances of the Erinyes called Eumenides, or 'the gentle ones,' of Epidamnus changed into Dyrrhachium, Axeinos into Euxine, Maleventum into Beneventum, Egesta into Segesta, or Capo Tormentoso into Cape of Good Hope. 'These omens derived from names,' says De Quincey,<sup>2</sup> 'are common to the ancient and modern world. But perhaps they ought to be classed under a much larger head, viz. words, generally, no matter whether proper names or appellatives, viewed as operative powers and agencies, bearing, that is to say, a charmed power against some party concerned from the moment that they leave the lips.' After mentioning the utter avoidance of all direct mention of death, he continues, 'Good taste is not in itself sufficient to account for a scrupulousness so general and so austere. . . . This timidity arises from the old superstition still lingering amongst men. . . . No progressive knowledge will ever medicine that dread misgiving of a mysterious and pathless power given to words of a certain import, or uttered in certain situations, by a parent for instance to persecuting or insulting children;<sup>3</sup> by the victim of horrible oppression when labouring in final agonies; and by others, whether cursing or blessing, who stand central to great passions, to great blessings, or to great perplexities. And here, by way of parenthesis, I might stop to attempt an explanation of the force attached to that Scriptural expression, "*Thou hast said it.*" It is an answer adopted by our Saviour, and the meaning seems radically

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<sup>1</sup> See Disraeli, *Curios. of Lit.* ii. 62. Mill's *Logic*, ii. 30. The mere euphonic changes of name are of course quite different; such as Diocles into Diocletian, De la Borgne to Strabo, Charpentier to Fabricius, Schwartzerd to Melanchthon, &c.

<sup>2</sup> De Quincey's *Modern Superstitions*, Works, iii. 303 (Black's ed.).

<sup>3</sup> Jacob's deathbed prophecy, turning as it mainly does on the significance of names, will at once occur to the reader.

to be this<sup>1</sup>—the popular belief authorised the notion that simply to have uttered any great thesis, though unconsciously—simply to have united verbally any two great ideas, though for a purpose the most different or even opposite, had the mysterious power of realising them in act. . . . An exclamation, though in the purest spirit of sport, addressed to a boy, “*You shall be our Imperator,*”<sup>2</sup> was many times supposed to be the forerunner and fatal mandate for the boy’s elevation. Words that were blind, and words that were torn from frantic depths of anguish, oftentimes, it was thought, executed themselves. To connect, though but for denial or for mockery, the ideas of Jesus and the Messiah, furnished an augury of their eventual coincidence. It was an *argumentum ad hominem*, and drawn from a popular faith.’<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly hundreds of instances might be adduced in which chance words *have* seemed to become living powers effectual for evil or for good. It is easy to explain this on the hypothesis of accidental coincidences; but the explanation has never carried conviction to the popular instinct, and there can be little doubt that this dark ominousness of words—their apparent power of meeting with malignant exterior influences, and co-operating with them for evil—has been one great ground for the views of the Analogists as to their inherent force. Again, there are words in all languages which *appear* to have been directly created, to have issued direct from the human mind. For, says M. Victor Hugo, ‘it is the mystery of language to paint with words which have, we know not how or why, faces. This is the primitive foundation of every human language, or what might be

<sup>1</sup> By quoting this explanation for the sake of the thoughts which it involves, I do not mean to endorse its truth. That it does express the Jewish conception is illustrated by their belief in the famous *Bath Kol*.

<sup>2</sup> Such stories are told of Galba, and of our own Henry VII. among others.

<sup>3</sup> De Quincey quotes as another instance of stray words taking effect, and becoming fruitful of consequences, the answer of the impatient Pythia to Alexander the Great. ὦ παῖ ἀνικατός εἰ.

called the granite. Slang swarms with words of this nature, words created all of one piece, it is impossible to say when or by whom, without etymologies, analogies, or derivatives—solitary, barbarous, and at times hideous words which have a singular power of expression, and are alive. The executioner, *le taule*; forest, *le sabri*; fear, *taf*; the devil, *le rabouin*. . . . They form transparent masks, grotesque and terrible like a Cyclopean grimace.’ Admiring the rare eloquence of this passage, we must reject its assertion that words are ever thus created. Their origin may be forgotten, but assuredly there was always a definite and intelligible motive for the forms they assume. Nay, even the instances which M. Victor Hugo selects are easily explicable. ‘Taule’ is derived from ‘tollere,’ the cry of ‘tolle, tolle’ being frequent in an old passion-play. *Sabri* is very possibly a mere metathesis for *arbres*. *Taf*<sup>1</sup> is a pure onomatopœia from a French proverb in which *tif-taf* is used like our own expression ‘my heart went pit-a-pat.’ Lastly, *rabouin* is from the Spanish *rabo* ‘a tail,’ and means the personage with a tail; and M. Michel, from whose philological study of the Argot we borrow these derivations, thinks that the medieval belief that the Jews were born with tails rose from a consequent misinterpretation of the word Rabbi.

Another ground for accepting the mystic origin of language has been the extraordinary and inexplicable moral influence which words have exercised. The Athenians, by a tendency which they named *Asteiotes* or *Hypocorisma*, systematically substituted pleasant for unpleasant names, and gilded the most disagreeable subjects with tolerable and

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<sup>1</sup> According to Michel, and Nodier, and Covarruvias, *taffetas* is also an onomatopœia from the noise made by the substance; and a passage in M. Vămbéry’s *Travels* (p. 173) shows this derivation to be certain. In the passage of M. Vămbéry’s *Travels* here alluded to, he says that the value of a dress is in Turkestan mainly estimated by the stiffness of the *sound* which it makes. ‘The Oriental,’ he observes, ‘is fond of the *Tchak-tchuck* or rustling tone of the dress.’ (*Travels*, p. 173.)

decorous designations.<sup>1</sup> The left hand being ill-omened they called 'the better' or 'well-named' hand; idiocy they called simplicity (cf. 'natural,' 'simpleton,' 'buon huomo'); 'taxes' were termed 'subscriptions' or 'contributions'; 'the prison' was 'the house'; the executioner 'a public servant'; a general abolition of debts was 'a disburdening ordinance.'<sup>2</sup> Now imagine the power and danger of this hypocoristic process in times when it was fashionable to fling a delicate covering over the naked hideousness of vice. Thucydides<sup>3</sup> in one of the most profound and memorable passages in his history tells us how the morals of the Greeks of his day were undermined, and how carefully they concealed the ruin of their character under the flowers of their speech. 'The customary meaning of words with reference to actions they changed,' he says, 'at their will and pleasure; for un-reasoning rashness passed as "manliness" and "esprit de corps," and prudent caution for specious cowardice; sober-mindedness was a mere "cloak for effeminacy," and general prudence was "inefficient inertness."'<sup>4</sup> 'Men are wont for the most part,' says Procopius, 'to be ashamed not of base deeds but of base names.' 'Venit ad me,' says Seneca,<sup>5</sup> 'pro amico blandus inimicus; vitia nobis sub virtutum nomine obrepunt; temeritas sub fortitudinis titulo latet; moderatio vocatur ignavia; pro cauto timidus accipitur.' We are familiar with the 'Steal? Foh! convey the wise it call'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> τοὺς Ἀθηναίους λέγουσι τὰς τῶν πραγμάτων δυσχερείας ὀνόμασι χρηστοῖς καὶ φιλανθρώποις ἐπικαλύπτοντας ἀστειῶς ὑποκορίζεσθαι. Plutarch.

<sup>2</sup> See Stallbaum, *Plato, Rep.* p. 474 E. For the flattering hypocorisms of lovers and parents see Plut. *de Leg. Poet.* p. 44; *De Adulat. et Amic. Discrimine*, 56 C; *De Auditione*, p. 44 F. (These are quoted at length in Stallbaum's *Plato, Legg.* ii. 5.) See too Lucret. iv. 1154; Hor. *Sat.* i. 3, 37-48, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Thuc. *Hist.* iii. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Compare a very similar passage in *Clarendon's Life*, ii. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Sen. *Ep.* xlv. ; in *Ep.* cxiv. there are some striking remarks on this subject.

<sup>6</sup> Compare *K. Rich.* II. iv. 1 :—

'Bolingbroke. Convey him to the tower.

*K. Rich.* Oh! good! Convey? Conveyors are you all.'

The French *emporteur* has the same sense.

of Shakspeare's rogue. The same hypocorisma runs through the whole vocabulary of the Argot. To take instances of such euphemism from Shakspeare alone, we find that 'Thieves' call themselves 'St. Nicholas's clerks' (*Henry IV. I. ii. 1*), 'nut-hooks' (*Merry Wives, i. 1*), 'Michers' (*Henry IV. I. ii. 4*), 'Trojans' (*Love's Labour's Lost, v. 2*)—anything in fact but *thieves*; just as to this day among the low and the vicious a lie is not a lie but 'a cram;' and to steal is not to steal but 'to bag' or 'to crib,' and this devil's vocabulary gives opprobrious names to virtues, as well as glossing names to every vice.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly possible to exaggerate the effects of such words, when we see throughout all history the influence of single expressions. Consider the effects produced on the Saxons by the word '*niedrig*;' on the French by the word '*gloire*;' on many nations by the simple onomatopœia 'barbarian;' on philosophy by the use of the word 'attraction;' on our Indian government by

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<sup>1</sup> We must again refer to the chapter in *Les Misérables* by V. Hugo. 'One word,' he says, 'resembles a claw; another a lustreless and bleeding eye; and some phrases seem to snap like the pincers of a crab. All this lives with the hideous vitality of things which are organised in disorganisation. It is the ugly, odious, cunning, treacherous, venomous, blear-eyed, vile, profound, and fatal language of misery. . . . The words are deformed, wild, imprinted with a kind of fantastic bestiality. You fancy that you hear hydras conversing; in darkness it gnashes its teeth, and talks in whispers, supplementing the gloom by enigmas. It is a horrifying froglike language which goes, comes, hops, crawls, slavers, and moans monstrously in that common grey mist composed of crime, night, hunger, vice, falsehood, injustice, nudity, asphyxia, and winter which is the high noon of the wretched.' : . .

'Mirlababi, surlababo  
Mirliton, ribonribette  
Surlababi, mirlababo  
Mirliton ribonribo.'

This is that shrill and leaping chorus of the galley-slaves 'which seems illumined by a phosphorescent gleam, and appears cast into the forest by a will-of-the-wisp playing the fife.' I abridge from the translation of *Les Misérables* by Sir F. Lascelles Wrayall.

the misapplication of the term 'landed proprietor.'<sup>1</sup> All these are instances of those 'rabble- charming words' which, as South says, 'have so much wild-fire wrapped up in them.' Consider, again, the marvellous correlation of Language and national morality;<sup>2</sup> the indefinable and indefinite unison of style and individual character. There is then 'a besotting intoxication which this verbal magic, if I may so call it, brings upon the mind of man. . . . Words are able to persuade men, out of what they find and feel, to reverse the very impressions of sense, and to amuse men with fancies and paradoxes even in spite of nature and experience. . . . He who shall duly consider these matters will find that there is a certain bewitchery or fascination in words, which makes them operate *with a force beyond what we can naturally give account of*.'<sup>3</sup>

The facts which we have here passed in review must receive due attention from the philologist, whatever theory of language he may hold. It is not strange that when taken in conjunction with the subtle laws which influence what can only be called the germination of language, they inspired the ancient Analogists with a conviction respecting their own theories, which the jokes and sneers of the opposite school were quite unable to shake. But in spite of the apparent ominous force of language, in spite of its subtle sorcery, its hidden operative agencies, its imperceptible growth,<sup>4</sup> its

<sup>1</sup> See *Origin of Lang.* p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> '*Genus dicendi imitatur publicos mores ; si disciplina civitatis laboravit et se in delicias dedit, argumentum est luxuriæ publicæ orationis lascivia : si modo non in uno aut in altero sint, sed approbata et recepta. Non potest alius esse ingenio, alius animo color.*' Seneca, *Ep.* 114. See also Herder, *Geist der ebraischen Poesie*, i. 12. *Origin of Lang.* p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> South's *Sermons*.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Max Müller (*Lectures*, i. 203) considers this expression 'inconceivable,' and as an instance in which 'poetical phraseology takes the place of sound and severe reasoning.' I can only reply that it is an obvious metaphor which approximately represents the facts and their unknown cause ; and *it is one which he himself constantly employs*. See



secret germinative power—in spite even of certain imponderable and inexplicable elements which remain after all that is discoverable in the history of language has been subtracted—we have seen in the course of our previous enquiries, and shall see further in the next chapter, that the Analogists were wrong ;—that language is no diviner than any other product of the human intelligence ;—that it contains in itself the germs of no new truths ;—that it has nothing whatever to tell us of the nature of things.

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pp. 36, 40, 59, 66, 126, 130 of his *Lectures* (First edition). Indeed his terms are contradictory, for on p. 66 he says that his use of the word 'growth' means mere accretion, like that of the crust of the earth ; yet on p. 49 'Language requires a *soil* on which to grow ;' and again on p. 59 'Remove a language from its *native soil*, tear it away from the dialects which are its feeders, *and you at once arrest its natural growth.*' Moreover Bunsen, the last person whom he would wish to disparage, says even more strongly that language '*has all the distinctive peculiarities of vegetable nature,*' &c. *Outlines*, ii. 135, and in i. 166 he talks of 'the analogy existing between the development of plants and words.' Schleicher says 'Die Sprachen *leben*, wie alle Naturorganismen ; sie handeln nicht wie der Mensch, haben also keine Geschichte, woferne wir dieses Wort in seinem engeren und eigentlichen Sinne fassen.'  
*Comp. d. vergl. Gram.* p. I.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NATURE OF WORDS—*continued.*

Words are the notes of thought, and nothing more ;  
 Words are like seashells on the shore, they show  
 Where the mind ends, and not how far it has been.

BAILEY'S *Festus*.

IT has been a favourite practice with writers on Language to illustrate the union of sound and sense in Words by the analogous union of Body and Soul in Man ;<sup>1</sup> and the analogy is not unnatural, because Language owes its development both to physical and to intellectual laws. But we must not be misled by a mere figure of speech to the conclusion that the organic union of sound with sense is as inexplicable a mystery as the combination of soul and body into one living being. If the connection between them were purely arbitrary, if no account could be given of the conformity between the sign and the thing signified, we might accept the existence of language as an ultimate fact which no enquiry could penetrate or explain. But we have seen in the previous pages that there is no reason for assuming that the origin of Language has been veiled in this divine obscurity ; so far from offering us an insoluble problem it is capable, as we have seen, of a perfectly simple, perfectly natural, and perfectly demonstrable solution. Sounds, the material of words, are furnished to us by the sense of hearing acted upon by the Voice—the organs of the Voice being stimulated to energy

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<sup>1</sup> Becker, *Organism. d. Sprache*, § 1, 2, 4. Hermann, *Das Problem d. Sprache*, p. 1.

by a reflex action resulting from nervous impressions, whether caused by external influences or by inward emotions. Direct imitation of sounds (onomatopœias), as well as instinctive utterances of feeling (interjections), are due to this close living sympathy between soul and body—the instinct of imitation being probably, in its earliest stages, a purely nervous phenomenon and not a conscious act.

The material of speech having thus been supplied by the body, and by the senses, the Soul began to play its part. The Imagination, working by the Law of Association of Ideas, elevated the modified imitation or the instinctive cry into a *symbol* of the thing from which the sound emanated, or of the emotion by which the cry was caused.

Then, thirdly, the Understanding seized upon this symbolic mark as a *sign* of the object signified, a sign capable of being banished and recalled at pleasure, and capable further of being elevated above the mere individual representation into a pure concept of an entire genus or species.<sup>1</sup>

In every word then we can distinguish three factors: (i.) the sound, which is the incarnation of the thought; (ii.) the inner form of the word, or the special method of this incarnation; and (iii.) the meaning, i.e. the intuitions and concepts which the word expresses. In this respect a word resembles a work of art, which also contains three elements: e.g. the material of this statue is marble; the form of it is a virgin figure with sword and scales; and it *represents* Justice.<sup>2</sup>

Now the ancients very generally believed that words were images, copies, imitations, microcosms of the sensible world<sup>3</sup>—and that they expressed the nature and essence of things; and similar expressions have been used down to the

<sup>1</sup> See Heyse, pp. 95, 160. And for a still fuller treatment of the whole subject Steinthal, *Charakter. des hauptsächlichsten Sprachbaues*, 77–105. *Gramm. Log. und Psychol.* 235–320, *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Steinthal, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> εἰκέναι ταῖς εἰκόσι τῶν ὁρατῶν, Heracl.; ἀγάλματα φωνήεντα, Democr. They are also called δηλώματα, ἀπεικάζματα, μιμήματα, &c. Lersch, iii. 24, *et passim*.

latest times ;—this conception of them being, as we saw in the last chapter, common alike to the profoundest philosophers and the most untutored savage. Is there any gleam of truth in such a view ?

Absolutely none, unless it may be supposed to lie in the *single* fancy that interjections being purely unconscious must, in the nature of things, have some mysterious unison with the feelings which they indicate ;<sup>1</sup> and unless again it be imagined that there is some secret connection between the unknown essence of things and the manner in which they are capable of affecting the auditory nerve.

‘ Word ’ is etymologically connected, not with *werden*<sup>2</sup> to become, but with the roots *war*, *wahr*, ὁ-ῶ, *ver-bum*, *ver-um* ; and therefore involves the notion of something visible, or perceptible. To call a word a ‘ copy ’ of anything external is an expression almost meaningless ; for a word cannot in any sense be the exact equivalent either (i.) of a thing, or (ii.) of our notion of a thing.

(i.) Words can tell us nothing whatever about things.

For of things, of the external world, of matter, of the Non-Ego,<sup>3</sup> we know and can know nothing whatever ; in other words, it is certain that the Non-Ego is not only unknown but incognisable. For even in receiving sensations the soul is active as well as passive ;<sup>4</sup> unless it were so, it would no more perceive than a mirror perceives the objects reflected on its surface. It modifies every sensation which it receives,<sup>5</sup> and it creates by its own activity that

<sup>1</sup> On this subject see Steinthal, *Grammatik*, p. 304. Wüllner, *Urspr. d. Sprache*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Heyse, p. 115. For the derivation of Speech, v. ante. Language is from *Lingua*, which comes from the onomatopoeic root *lk*.

<sup>3</sup> If any of my readers are wholly ignorant of philosophy and its terminology, they will find nothing to understand in the next two or three pages ; nevertheless they contain the reasonings and conclusions of some of the subtlest and profoundest thinkers who ever lived.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle distinctly recognised this very important fact ; οὐτε τῆς ψυχῆς ἴδιον τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι οὐτε τοῦ σώματος. *De Somno*, i. 5.

<sup>5</sup> See Lewes, *Biogr. Hist. of Philosophy*, p. 579.

synthesis of accidents which we call substance. It is true that in common language we talk of heat, colour, smell, &c., not only as sensations within us, but as qualities assumed to be inherent in things themselves. But this is a mere imbecility of language, since not only these secondary qualities but even the so-called primary qualities of figure, extension, solidity, &c., have long ago been proved by metaphysical enquiry to be mere modifications of our consciousness. Matter is not the *cause* of our cognitions, but only their *element* or *part*. 'Things and the senses can no more transmit cognitions to the mind, than a man can transmit to a beggar a guinea that he has not got.'<sup>1</sup> To say that our sensations teach us anything whatever about things in themselves is nonsense. What can we know about salt, for instance, if its taste, whiteness, shape, &c., which form the abstract complex or collective impression of it, be merely accidents of our own consciousness, or forms of the apperception? Can an East wind be *like* the sensation of cold?<sup>2</sup> Can heat be *like* boiling water? Can pain be *like* the pricking of a pin? Can the nature of a poppy leaf be *like* drowsiness, or our sensation of the colour red? Can the bits of glass in a kaleidoscope be like the rose or star which we see in consequence of the arrangement of the mirrors placed inside the tube? The external world imparts as little of its own nature to the sentient subject as the finger of a performer to the strings on which he plays—and the sensations which we receive *from* it as little resemble it as the music evoked from those strings resembles the epidermis by the contact of which they are evoked.<sup>3</sup> 'Just as the little green, red, or gold clouds, which the eye, when blinded for any length of time by the sun, sees flitting before it, reveal only a certain internal disposition of the organ of sight; so also do the qualities

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<sup>1</sup> Ferrier, *Inst. of Metaphysics*, p. 473, *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Mill, *Logic*, i. 60; ii. 4. Victor Cousin, *Cours d'Hist. de la Phil. Mor.* 8<sup>me</sup> leçon.

<sup>3</sup> Chalybäus, *Hist. of Spec. Philos.*, Eng. tr. p. 156.

in which the world mirrors itself before us, reveal only the internal natural constitution of our own intelligence.' Nay more, speaking logically, the external world is *posited* by the activity of the Ego; even the belief in its existence is the result of involuntary mental laws. The arguments of Fichte are logically unanswerable, that 'all that we could know of things without us, even their bare existence, is still *within* us, and is only a thought, a something thought of by ourselves;'—i.e. in Fichtean language 'the Ego posites the Non-Ego, and ascribes to it the activity, the causality which it is not conscious of exercising itself.' How then—even if we stop far short of this subjective Idealism—can words tell us anything whatever about the nature of things? Obviously they cannot. Experience is a mere 'tissue of relations.' The '*Ansich*' or intrinsic nature of things happily in no way concerns us, and whether it concerns us or not must for ever remain unknown.

(ii.) But perhaps Words, if they can tell us nothing about *things*, may yet tell us something about *notions*, i.e. about ourselves, and the modifications of our own consciousness?

Not in the least! The subject is and must ever remain for us as incognisable as the object, the Ego as the Non-Ego; and for the very same reasons. We only *know* the modifications, changes, accidents, sensations of the Ego, and we only assume an unknown something whose very existence *consists* in being thus affected. The Ego is nothing more than an assumed something stripped bare of everything whereby its existence is made conceivable,<sup>1</sup> and it is unknown alike to internal and to external experience. It is what

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, *Krit. d. reinen Vernunft*, p. 431, quoted by Chalybäus p. 39. 'That which we call "I" is the object of intellect alone. We are never objects of sense to ourselves.' Ferrier, *Inst. of Metaph.* p. 80. 'For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat, light, or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception.' David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, i. 4, 6.

remains of a bundle of fagots when every single fagot has been removed and excluded! 'It is the *thought* of an abstract something, invested by a paralogism of the reason with imaginary attributes.' In the phrase of Fichte it is a self-intuition (*Sichselbstanschauen*)—an internal reflection—'the subject before which its own image floats as object.' In the 'primitive dualism of consciousness,' the subject and object being inseparable, either of them apart from the other must be an unknown quantity; the separation of either is the annihilation of both.<sup>1</sup> 'The mental act in which self is known, implies, like every other mental act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If then the object perceived is *self*, what is the subject that perceives? or if it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of?'

If then we can know nothing about the Ego, and nothing about the Non-Ego, how can words reveal to us either the nature of things or our own essence? How can they be a *μύησις* of either of two unknown quantities? And if it were conceivable that words *could* be, according to Becker, the exact organic equivalent of our notions, how would synonyms be possible? The existence of many different terms for the same conception is as valid against the theories of Becker as it was of old against those of Heraclitus.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear therefore that we cannot rest content with the modern definition that 'words are the names of things' any more than with the old one that they are the 'pictures of ideas.'<sup>3</sup> Nothing more accurate can be said of them than that they express the *relations*<sup>4</sup> of things; no better definition of them can be given than that of Hobbes that they are '*signs of our conceptions*,' 'serving the double purpose of a

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Steintal, *Gram.* p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> For some ancient and imperfect definitions of words see Voss. *de Arte Gram.* ii. 2, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Garnett, *Philol. Essays*, pp. 82, 282.

mark to recall to ourselves the likeness of a former thought, and a sign to make it known to others.’<sup>1</sup> It is obvious, says Hobbes, that they are not signs of the things themselves ; for that the sound of the word *stone* should be the sign of a stone, cannot be understood in any sense but this, that he that hears it collects that he that pronounces it thinks of a stone.

And even as the signs of our conceptions, words are at the best but very imperfect, inadequate signs in themselves, touching the conception generally but at one single point like a sphere lying on a plane. Language, as we have said before, is but an asymptote<sup>2</sup> to thought. It does not express the objective and external, but the inward as affected by it ; we speak rightly of ‘expressing *ourselves*,’ not of expressing the world. Words are but rude signs to represent approximately what *we think* about<sup>3</sup> the relations of things. We say *rude* signs, because no word is any way co-ordinate with the conception which it is taken to represent. Seizing on some characteristic mark of the conception it always expresses either too little or too much. It is sometimes distantly metaphorical, sometimes indefinitely assertive ; sometimes too concrete, sometimes too abstract. In estimating *words* we must take them according to their etymological meaning, and we shall then see how inadequate they are *in themselves* to involve the mass of facts which they connote—as inadequate as is a thin and worthless bit of paper which yet may represent a thousand pounds. Take the name of an animal, and it may very likely express some trivial and not invariable fact about its tail, as in *αἰλουρος*, or a vague and shadowy echo of its cry, as in *Ai-ai* or *cow*. Take the Latin ‘*Homo* ;’ etymologically it means a creature made of earth, and even this is but metaphorically true—yet for what

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill, *Logic*, i. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Orig. of Lang.* p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.* when we say ‘Sugar is sweet,’ our consciousness can tell us nothing about the nature of sugar itself, but merely the relation which it holds to our organs of taste. Steinthal, *Gram.* p. 305.



an infinite complex and aggregate of conceptions and relations does it stand! Take such words as *Virtue* or *Tugend* (from *vir*, and *taugen*), and what a world of explanation is requisite before the words can be shown to be even *possibly* co-extensive with the concept!<sup>1</sup> Or again out of numberless instances take a word expressive of the smallest possible modification of matter—a word invented in the most expressive language in the world, and invented by no less eminent a philosopher than Democritus, and that too with great applause—the word *atom*, meaning that which cannot be cut. Yet simple as is the notion to be expressed, and great as were the resources at command, what a failure the mere *word* is! ‘It expresses too much and too little, too much as being applicable to other things and consequently ambiguous; too little, because it does not express all the properties even of an atom.’<sup>2</sup> Its inadequacy cannot be more forcibly illustrated than by the fact that its precise Latin equivalent is by us confined to the single acceptance ‘insect’! ‘Thought is vast as the air; it embraces far more than languages can express, or rather languages express nothing;—they only make our thoughts leap out in electric sparks from the speaker to the listener. A single word suggests a crowd of ideas which the spirit combines and collects with the rapidity of lightning.’<sup>3</sup>

Words then must be dethroned from that exalted apotheosis which they received at the hands of the ancient Analogists. They are but the pyramidal point from which our conceptions

<sup>1</sup> The defectiveness of language is still more apparent when as in Chinese there is an attempt to reach, by *continuous analysis*, nearer and nearer to the expression of any conception; when, for instance, they express virtue by *Tsun-hyan-tsye-i*, i.e. fidelity-reverence-temperance-uprightness. The Sanskrit, as we have seen, has four names for elephant from different slight characteristics of the animal. ‘Were it to express all these qualities by one word,’ says Bopp, ‘it would be obliged to join all these names together, and to add a number of others.’

<sup>2</sup> Garnett, *Essays*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Du Ponceau, p. 32.

broaden down.<sup>1</sup> The world of Ideas which seems in them to find its being, is created, not by *them* but by the Intelligence which uses them as the convenient notation by which its problems are worked out. They are the starting-point of our higher Intelligence, not by any means the goal at which it arrives. Their value and greatness consists in the fact that without that starting-point no great intellectual achievement would have been possible. Yet if words are but the starting-point of the *full-grown* Intelligence, they are nevertheless the goal of its earlier development. Although we believe that the Genesis of Words may be distinctly traced—although we see in them nothing intrinsically mystical or essentially divine—we are well aware how enormous is the importance of considering them carefully in the search whether for moral, for scientific, for historical, or for religious truth. By earnestly studying them we are enabled historically to resuscitate the long-forgotten history of bygone millenniums, and to catch some glimpses into the past fortunes of nations whose very name and memory have been obliterated for ages<sup>2</sup> from every other record. Intellectually regarded, the study of them initiates us into the profoundest mysteries of the human understanding. It is the foundation of all metaphysics. For it is by words alone that we can discover ‘the manner in which ideas, born of perceptions, present themselves all naked to the human intelligence, while it is still engaged in their discovery and still seeking to communicate them to others; we follow the labour which it undergoes to arrive at this result, and in the want of uniformity in that labour we see the influence of different intellects.’<sup>3</sup> Hence fresh languages wisely acquired may afford

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*Catervatim irruunt cogitationes nostræ.*’ See Dante, *Inferno*, cant. xxiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> For instances see Weber, *Indische Skizzen*, 9. ‘A dead language is full of all monumental remembrances of the people who spoke it. Their swords and their shields are in it; their faces are pictured on its walls; and their very voices ring still through its recesses.’ Dwight, *Mod. Phil.* i. 341.

<sup>3</sup> Du Ponceau, p. 13.

us a nearer approximation to many truths than would be otherwise attainable, by suggesting thoughts and conclusions which have evaporated from our native tongue.<sup>1</sup> For 'language is the depositary of the accumulated body of experience, to which all former ages have contributed their part, and which is the inheritance of all yet to come.'<sup>2</sup> It is 'like amber circulating the electric spirit of truth, and preserving the relics of ancient wisdom.'<sup>3</sup> So important and indispensable is the right use of words to the progress of *Science* that some have gone so far as to call Science itself 'a well-constructed Language;' and, although this is an exaggeration, it is certain that in Scientific no less than in Religious history an ill-understood phrase, or an ambiguously-framed expression, has been sufficient to retard the progress, and kindle the passions, of men during centuries of warfare.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, who shall overstate the moral bearing and importance of words? They stereotype our desires, they mislead our consciences, they add intensity to our temptations, they determine our bias, they decide our destiny. Once spoken they are irrevocable, indelible for ever. 'Words, words, words, good and bad . . . millions in the hour, innumerable in the day, unimaginable in the year; what then in the life? what in the history of a nation? what in that of

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<sup>1</sup> Leibnitz showed less than his usual acumen in the remark that 'si una lingua esset in mundo, accederet in effectu generi humano tertia pars vitæ, quippe quæ linguis impenditur.' *Opp.* iii. 297, ed. Dutens. If truth could be gained without an effort it would lose half its value, and these studies are the best discipline to prepare us for the search after truth. 'Studium linguarum,' says Valcknaer, 'in universis, in ipsis primordiis triste est et ingratum; sed primis difficultatibus labore improbo et ardore nobili perruptis, postea . . . cumulatissime beamur.' See Pott, *Die Ungleichheit*, &c., p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Mill, *Logic*, ii. 225.

<sup>3</sup> Coleridge.

<sup>4</sup> How much were men's passions inflamed round the two words *Homoousion*, and *Homoiousion*, and how many became in consequence the 'martyrs of a diphthong'!

the world? And not one of them is ever forgotten. There is a book where they are all set down. What a history, it has been well said, is this earth's atmosphere, seeing that all words spoken from Adam's first till now, are still vibrating on its sensitive unresting medium !'

Be our scientific conclusions and our philological studies what they may, it is well for every man to consider solemnly such truths as these ; it is above all a duty for one who writes a book, and that book a book on words. And therefore, gentle reader, I will add this word only about myself—that before writing I have read diligently, and what I have written I have striven to write honestly, loving the truth and aiming at truth only, endeavouring not to forget even in the midst of controversy that 'it is by a man's words that he is justified, and by a man's words that he is condemned.'

## BOOKS CONSULTED.

It may be a convenience to students of this subject, if I add a list of those books which, among many others, I have *expressly* consulted in this work, and to which I have constantly referred. The extent to which I am indebted to the various authors will be indicated in the notes. I have never consciously omitted my fullest acknowledgments when I am indebted to others for any facts, thoughts, or expressions which I have adopted. There is no book in the following list which I have not myself read through, or frequently used; and I have omitted many to which more cursory reference was made.

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# FAMILIES OF SPEECH:

## FOUR LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN

IN MARCH 1869.

TO  
PROFESSOR MAX MÜLLER, M.A.

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE,  
&c. &c.

WHO HAS DONE MORE THAN ANY LIVING SCHOLAR TO  
RENDER THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY  
AT ONCE POPULAR AND PROFOUND,

I Dedicate these Lectures

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.



THESE LECTURES were originally delivered, by request of the Committee, before the Royal Institution of Great Britain, in February and March 1869.

They are now republished, because the first edition has been exhausted, and because many teachers have found them useful as an introduction to the closer and more formal study of Comparative Philology.

THE LODGE, MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE •

*August 1873.*

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# FAMILIES OF SPEECH.

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## LECTURE I.

It may be a humiliating, but it is an unquestionable fact, that the growth and development of the human intelligence are extraordinarily slow. If we may trust to the evidence which has been so abundantly amassed for the last twenty years by various cognate sciences, and especially by the new science of Prehistoric Archæology, man must be supposed to have wandered for many centuries over the surface of the earth in a condition which seems at first sight but little elevated above that of the beasts which perish,—in a condition, at any rate, as thoroughly degraded as that of the squalid Fuegian, or the hideous Mincopie. Navigators have told us about savages who were ignorant of the use of fire, and who looked upon the boiling water of a kettle as an animal which bit. Savages still exist, who, separated by thousands of years from the very epoch in which they live, have never yet discovered so much as a coracle wherewith to cross their own rivers, or even (it is said) the possibility and advantage of milking their own cows. As far as we can go back in history, or tradition, or by inferences drawn from undoubted relics of a period when man disputed the possession of his cave-habitation with the hyæna or the bear, it is by such savages that we find the earth to have been overspread. Wherever the foot of civilised man has penetrated,—on every continent which he has explored, and wellnigh in every island which the keels of his ships have

touched,—he has found the lands of which he at once proclaimed himself the lord and master, in the immemorial possession of these dark-skinned nations, which though they differed from each other in their moral nature as widely as the sensibility of the delicate and voluptuous Tahitian differs from the dull apathy of the savage and brutal Mundrucus, yet agreed in the utter non-development of their condition, and in their apparent incapacity to exist side by side with the advanced culture of a fairer race. These inferior and autochthonous tribes have no history ; their very existence, —the significance of which for the history of humanity cannot be fully understood,—is now, alas, only a precarious present, with no record in the past and the certain fading away into extinction in the future.

How long this prehistoric night of the human intelligence may have lasted we cannot say, and there are of course large regions of the globe where it has not yet been dispelled. But next in order to these unprogressive savages, in the earliest dawn of any civilising influences, though still far back in the remotest traditions of the most ancient humanity, appear<sup>1</sup> the great semi-civilised races of Eastern Asia and Northern Africa,—the Egyptians, over the records of whose many dynasties of kings ‘the iniquity of oblivion’ has indeed ‘blindly scattered her poppy,’ but who, in pyramid and obelisk and painted sepulchre, have left behind them the imperishable material records of their cruel, crude, and one-sided development ; and the Chinese, who with their ideographic writing, their monosyllabic language, their materialistic culture, and the sudden suspension of progress observable in the promising commencements of their art and science, continue to exist like the reanimated fossils of some extinct organism. It might well have been imagined some thousands of years ago, that in the latter at any rate of

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<sup>1</sup> This word ‘appear’ is perhaps the best which we can use, because no vaguer word could be found to represent an historic fact of which the true nature never has been, and perhaps never will be, satisfactorily explained.

these two races, there was hope for the continuous progress of mankind ; but for long centuries some inexplicable paralysis seems to have stricken the vitality of every other mental faculty, and left them the enjoyment of memory alone. A once gifted and living intelligence has been, since history has left any record of its existence, bound hand and foot in the mummy-cerements of an obstinate, unmeaning, and indomitable conservatism.

It is not till the third great æon of human records—far back indeed, but still so immediately connected with the present by a demonstrable continuity, as to be almost visible to us by the combined use of the telescope of history and the microscope of linguistic archæology—that we begin to recognise in their neighbouring cradles in the vast tablelands of Central Asia, the two great races to whose existence is due all, or nearly all, which makes man most distinctively man ;—the stately, thoughtful Semitic race, to which belong, within but a few days' journey, such volcanic centres of religious enthusiasm as Mecca, Sinai, and Jerusalem, and to which it was given to express for ever the most unfathomable depths of religious emotion, and the loftiest heights of holy aspiration :—and the noble, ever-progressive Aryan race, the progenitor of Persian and Pelasgian, and Celt and Teuton, the discoverer of wellnigh everything which is great and beneficent in the arts of war and peace, the race from whose bosom came Charlemagne and Alfred, Dante and Shakspeare, M. Angelo and Raphael, Newton and Descartes, —the parent in the modern world of the metaphysical subtlety of Germany, and the vivid intelligence of France, and the imperial energy of England, the parent in the ancient world of the lofty spiritualism of India, 'of the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome.'<sup>1</sup> Since, then, these two latter races, the Semitic and the Aryan, in which alone the spirit of inquiry seems to have been

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<sup>1</sup> See, for an admirable résumé of these facts, Renan, *Hist. des Langues Sémitiques*, pp. 490-92.

developed, are, so to speak, the youngest members of the great human family, it is hardly to be wondered that, probably, thousands of years had passed over hundreds of unprogressive generations, before it ever occurred to men to notice that there was anything wonderful in the faculty by which they were most distinctively men. Our savage progenitors, like our savage contemporaries, wondered at nothing. Their life, if I may be allowed the expression, resolved itself into a boundless anxiety about their dinner—not, I mean, as to its quality, which is perhaps an anxiety of civilisation, but as to its quantity, and above all as to the probability of procuring it. There are two kinds of ignorance, the one stolid and sterile, the daughter of a merely animal vacuity; the other quick and intelligent, the twin-sister of admiration and the parent of that beautiful and reverent wonder from which springs the whole progeny of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> But when the stolid ignorance of the savage was succeeded by the wondering and open-eyed ignorance of the Aryan and Semite,—when in the two noblest branches of the human race, intelligence of any kind was once stimulated into activity, it is certainly amazing if anything could be amazing when we have once realised how strangely slow has been the development of mankind, that the spirit of inquiring wonder was so little directed to any single phenomenon of human speech, or that, when directed, it should have been for long ages so erroneous in its methods, and so narrow in its conditions. Man was in possession of a faculty, which was not only the simplest, the most unexpected, and the most essential of all his faculties, but also the most spontaneous, and the most easy of consideration. He possessed in the organs of utterance a musical instrument which was at once a harp, an organ, and a flute—a musical

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<sup>1</sup> 'In wonder all philosophy begins, in wonder it ends, and admiration fills up the interspace: but the first wonder is the offspring of Ignorance; the second is the parent of Adoration: the first is the birth-throe of knowledge; the last is its euthanasy and apotheosis.'  
—*Coleridge*.

instrument of astonishing compass, of infinite inflexibility of most thrilling and mysterious power, on which Nature herself gave him, without any conscious effort of his own, the mastery of a finished performer. But what relation had this strong yet delicate organ of sound to all the great many-coloured world of phenomena without him, and all the shadow-world of impression within him? To his ears Nature brought infinite variations of melody; she whispered to him in the rustling of the forest leaves; she sang to him in the rising and falling of the wind; she shouted aloud in the voices of the mountain and the sea; and it might be conceivable that, *so far*, he might translate into living and articulate utterance these multitudinous and varied intonations. But what imaginable connection had this vast chorus of sounds with the dumb or inaudible sensations which thronged to him through the gateway of four other senses, in the sweetness of odours, in the multitude of tastes, in the warmth of the sunlight, or even in the 'soft eye-music' of the colour and the light? It might have seemed in the very nature of things an impossibility to translate the manifestations of one sense into any form of analogy which should be comprehensible to another, or to render the expression of such distant analogies in any way significant to the strange totality of the individual mind. And when this apparent impossibility was complicated by what might have seemed the yet *greater* impossibility of finding an utterance for the invisible, voiceless, *inward* emotions of the intellectual and spiritual being,—of *co-ordinating* the expression of sensations from the *outward*, with impressions from the *inward* microcosm, and of rendering them alike intelligible to the *separate* world which comes before us in the personality of each individual man,—here was a problem before which even a divine Thoth or an eloquent Hermes might have yielded in despair. Yet here was a problem which the simplest savage infant had, somehow or other, been taught unconsciously to solve; so that by the fluid air which he articulates into human utterance

man has found it easy to fill the universe with living words which are at once the pictures of its material phenomena and the 'shadows of his own soul;' and on a sonorous wave, more evanescent than the tremulous laughter which ripples the summer sea, he can impress records of his outward history and of his inmost being more indestructible than Babylonian palace or Egyptian pyramid. And short as is the reach of that 'pulse of articulated air,' and rapidly as its undulations disappear, he can yet grave the symbols of its vibrations on the rock, or paint them on the vellum, or print them in the book, so that they can live from generation to generation, and reach from pole to pole.

That by long researches into evidence derived from every country and every age, this almost incredible problem has been at least approximately solved, it has been my object to maintain in a little work *On the Origin of Language*, and subsequently to defend against the strictures of more than one eminent opponent. I have there endeavoured to prove that the *Idea of Speech*—the δύναμις or potential faculty of it as distinguished from the ἐνέργεια or actual exercise—lay implicitly in two undeniable natural instincts, and one psychological law. The conception that it was possible to render intelligible to the ear sensations derived from the *outer* world arose from the instinct which leads to the articulate reproduction of natural sounds. The conception that it was possible to express in sound the inward emotions—the invisible life of the individual soul—arose from the felt significance of those instinctive and involuntary cries which are the germs of interjections. The conception that it was possible to develop these elementary methods of expressing and recalling the phenomena alike of the ego and of the non-ego, and to combine the utterances of both into intelligible speech, was due to the Law of Association. An imitation of the sound made by any animal was readily accepted as a symbol of the animal whose image the sound recalled, and also as a symbol of the ideal conceptions which the animal naturally represented. The free and

necessary use of such symbols would rapidly lead, as it does among the deaf and dumb, to the perception of certain inexplicable analogies between the impressions produced by external objects on *different* senses. Thus there would arise that metaphorical mode of expressing thought which so completely permeates the whole of language as to render it one vast volume of compressed allegories and implied resemblances. Each metaphor, as it became current, would be accepted in its secondary meaning, and language would soon become, what now it is, a conventional and artificial instrument for the utterance and intercommunion of human thought.<sup>1</sup>

Into the grounds of this demonstration,—a demonstration which, as far as I can see, elucidates every single step of the process, and which is deduced from and supported by the actual facts of languages in every stage of crudity or development,—I do not purpose to enter in these Lectures; both because the arguments on which it rests are before the world, and have never, so far as I am aware, been proved to be erroneous, and also because I have already published all that I immediately desire to say upon the subject. Suffice it to call attention to the repeated admission that by such a process language *could* have been developed, and that no other theory deserving of the name has ever been offered in its place. It is rather my purpose in these Lectures summarily to sketch the broadest and most general results of linguistic inquiry, and to dwell less on disputed theory than on well-established facts.

But as I wish first of all to pass in review the gradual *growth* of Comparative Philology, I may mention that although among the rude primeval races to which I have alluded, language excited little or no speculation, and even Grimm, with his immense research, only knew of one legend bearing upon it, yet, curiously enough, that legend shows a rude

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<sup>1</sup> 'Itaque si antiquum sermonem nostro comparemus, *pæne quicquid loquimur figura est.*'—Quint. *Instt. Orat.* ix. 3.

attempt to express the true theory. It is the Esthonian legend<sup>1</sup> that 'the Aged One,' as they call the Deity,<sup>2</sup> placed on the fire a kettle of boiling water, from the hissing and bubbling of which the various nations learnt their languages. This kettle is no other than the mist-wreathed crest of the Kesselberg with its storms and thunders; so that this aboriginal people instinctively conjectured that nature alone had taught men how to modulate vague sounds into intelligible utterances, just as they supposed that Song had been learnt by man first, and by all voiceful creatures, from listening to Wäinämöinen as he sat and played amid the roaring woods of the Domberg, while the fish only remained dumb because, when they stuck up their heads, their ears still remained under water, and they could only imitate the motion of the god's mouth.<sup>3</sup> A similar legend is that of the Australians who explained the gift of speech by saying that people had eaten an old woman, named Wururi, who used to go about at night quenching fires with a damp stick; for Wururi is no other than the damp night-wind, and the languages learnt from devouring her are the guttural reproduction of natural sounds.<sup>4</sup>

2. Turning from savage to semi-civilised races, we are not aware that among any of them, even among the intelligent Chinese, any speculations respecting the nature of language have arisen. The only thing which was likely to have turned Chinese curiosity in this direction was the

<sup>1</sup> See *Chapters on Language*, p. 101. I trust that I may be pardoned for trenching once or twice in this Lecture on ground which I have already traversed.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'the Ancient of days.'—Dan. vii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Kalewala*, however, the national epic of the Finns, there is nothing special in the conduct of the fish while Wäinämöinen sings.—*Kuuc.* xli. 1. 117.

'Damals gab es keine Wesen,  
Keine Thiere in dem Wasser,  
Die zum hören nicht gekommen,  
Sich nicht freuen voll Erstaunen.'

(Schlieffner's translation, p. 241.)

<sup>4</sup> I adopt Steinthal's explanation of this legend.



influence which Buddhism acquired over vast portions of their race, which led to the translation into Chinese of various Buddhist books, all abounding in Sanskrit names, which also occurred with great frequency in the narratives of the Chinese pilgrims. The deciphering of these names as they appear transliterated in Chinese books is one of the most brilliant achievements of philological science, and the manner in which it has been effected by M. Stanislas Julien<sup>1</sup> is one of the many proofs how intense is the devotion which that science inspires in its pioneers.<sup>2</sup> Before M. Julien devoted his attention to the subject, the problems had remained unsolved because the sinologues had known no Sanskrit, and the Indianists had known no Chinese. M. Julien had become a sinologue by accident. One day he had strolled into the room of a young friend, M. Fresnel, who was preparing a passage of the philosopher Meng-tsen for a lesson with M. Abel de Rémusat. M. Fresnel explained the signs, and went through the lesson word for word. M. Julien asked, more as a joke than anything else, if he might take M. Fresnel's place at the lecture. He did so, and construed the passage through with perfect correctness. From that time he became a pupil of M. de Rémusat, and before the year was over had studied with such ardour

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<sup>1</sup> See *Méthode pour déchiffrer et transcrire les noms sanscrits qui se rencontrent dans les livres chinois*. 1861.

<sup>2</sup> Take for instance such a life as that of Anquetil du Perron. At the age of twenty he accidentally found some Zend MSS., and was fired with the determination to visit India, and bring back the works of Zoroaster. In order to do so he gave up good prospects of ecclesiastical preferment, and, being too poor to carry out his designs in any other way, enlisted as a common soldier, and left Paris on November 7, 1754, with a knapsack on his back, behind a bad drum, an old sergeant, and half-a-dozen recruits. Neither tigers, forests, wild elephants, treacherous guides, deceitful teachers, moral temptations, or jungle fevers diverted him from a design in which he sought neither glory nor riches, but only knowledge and truth. Such men are the glory of a nascent science. 'Il faut lire,' says M. Michelet, 'au premier volume de son livre, l'étrange Iliade de tout ce qu'il endura, affronta et surmonta.'

as to be capable of publishing a French translation of the Chinese philosopher. But even this did not exhaust his patience. He bent his whole genius to solve the problem of deciphering these names which had hitherto, in Chinese translations, been expressed by phonetic signs of which no one possessed the key; they were called *Fan* words, and it was not even known that *Fan* was but an abbreviation of *Fan-lan-mo*, which is the necessary shape assumed in Chinese by the word *Brahma*.<sup>1</sup> The first who proved them to be Sanskrit words at all, was M. de Chézy.<sup>2</sup> For the sole purpose then of deciphering these words, M. Julien first made himself a master of Sanskrit, and then by the aid of two lists of Hindoo words written in phonetic characters, and translated into Chinese, after dissecting some 4,000 Sanskrit words which represented 12,000 syllables, and very many thousands of ideographic signs, he succeeded after fifteen years of minute, laborious, and almost unrelenting toil—toil which would seem unspeakably repulsive to any one who did not realise the self-rewarding ardour and heroic enthusiasm of scientific research—he succeeded in 1861 in demonstrating the law of transcription, and for the first time reading these names in their proper form.

3. The importance of this discovery, and the manner in which it illustrates what is now being done, excuse this momentary digression, although in fact no Chinese, so far as we are aware, ever devoted fifteen idle minutes to the philological inquiries which occupied the French scholar for fifteen toilsome years. But in this complete absence of all curiosity respecting language, the Chinese did not stand alone. The *Hebrews*, to whom we next turn, added as

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<sup>1</sup> Since in that language the letter *r* does not exist, and they are unable to pronounce two consecutive consonants by one emission of the voice. (Similarly *l* does not exist in *Zend* and *New Zealand*, and *r* is substituted for it.)

<sup>2</sup> He detected the word *Bharyā*, 'woman,' under the form *Po-li-ya*, and *Dēva* under the form *ti-po*, &c. The Sanskrit *bhavaṃ*, 'you two are,' becomes in Chinese *fo'po-po*.

little to Philology as the Chinese. Influenced by the belief—a belief which in reality contravened the distinct theory of their own sacred books—that God had *revealed* a full-grown language to mankind;—understanding with their usual literalness that the creation was the result of a fiat *articulately* spoken by the demiurgic voice—they attached to language a divine and mysterious character, and presupposed a *natural and necessary* connection between words and things. This conception runs through the whole of the Old Testament. By virtue of it we find in Genesis no less than fifty derivations of names, in many of which the name is evidently supposed to have had a mystic and prophetic influence—as when Noah is said to mean comfort, and in his days the earth was comforted; Peleg ‘division,’ and in his days the earth was divided; Abel ‘fleeing,’ and he died in youth.<sup>1</sup> It is to a similar cause that we owe those constant plays on words, very many of which might be selected from the sacred books, and of which one occurs as early as the second verse of the Book of Genesis.<sup>2</sup> A single instance will perhaps be sufficient to illustrate the Hebrew conception of the sacredness of words. You will remember in St. Matthew (ii. 23) the passage, ‘And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.’<sup>3</sup> Now no such passage occurs anywhere in the prophets, and it is an ancient interpretation,

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<sup>1</sup> It is well known that many of these etymologies are *philologically* untenable, and are merely meant to have a mystic significance. *Isshah*, ‘woman,’ for instance, cannot be derived from *Eesh* (Gen. ii. 23), nor Noah from *Nacham*, ‘comfort’ (Gen. v. 29), nor Moses from *Māshah*, ‘be saved’ (Ex. ii. 10, cf. Gen. xli. 45), nor even Adam from *Adamah*, ‘earth’ (Gen. ii. 7).—See *Chapters on Language*, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> ‘And the earth was without form and void.’ תהו ובהו, *thohoo vabhoohoo*.

<sup>3</sup> Is. xi. 1. In the other Messianic passages referring to Christ under the title of ‘the Branch’ (Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15), the Hebrew word is not נֶצֶר, but צֶמַח, *tzemach*.

which is now most commonly received, that the passage is an allusion to a single word in Isaiah, where the promised Messiah is called Nētzer or the Branch. To accept the mere word—the mere physiological character of the sound entirely independent of its meaning—as in itself sufficient to involve a mysterious prophecy, if it served to recall other sounds expressive of totally different conceptions, is entirely accordant with what we know of the Hebrew view of words,<sup>1</sup> and especially of the words of the sacred book, the very letters of which they accurately numbered,<sup>2</sup> and in not a few instances built on a single letter a system of hidden significance.<sup>3</sup> Even the *anagram* of the name, even the meaning of words formed of letters which had the same

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<sup>1</sup> Even Bishop Ellicott seems to adhere to some such view, for he says that ‘we are justified in assigning to the word Ναῦπαῖος all the meanings legitimately belonging to it by derivation or otherwise. . . . We may therefore trace this prophetic declaration (a) principally and primarily in all the passages which refer to the Messiah under the title of the Branch, &c.’—*Life of Our Lord*, p. 81 n.

<sup>2</sup> The Masoretes numbered the verses of every book in the Bible, noted the middle verse of each book, the first and last letter of each verse, and even the number of letters which each contained. Thus, there were 5,888 verses in the Pentateuch, and Levit. xiii. 33 was the middle verse, &c. This purely superstitious reverence of the letter is closely analogous to that paid by the Hindoos to the Vedas, from which words must never be quoted without preserving their exact order and context.—Benfey, *Gesch. der Sprachw.* 57. In fact the grammarians at the court of Vicramāditya did for the Vedas the same kind of service that the Masoretes did for the Bible, and the Alexandrian Diasceuastræ for the poems of Homer.

<sup>3</sup> Besides the obvious sense of the Bible (*sensus innatus*), the Jewish Cabbalists believed in a *sensus illatus*, or inferential meaning, to be deduced by the three processes, *Gematria*, *Notargekon*, and *Temurah*. The first of these developed the symbolism of *letters* according to the number of times they occurred; the second made new words out of the initial or final letters; the third attached mystic significance to the anagram of words. For instance, by what was called *Atbash*, the word *Sheshach*, in Jer. xxv. 26, li. 41, was supposed by Jerome to stand for *Babel*, because the letters ששך occupy the same places, counting from the end of the alphabet, as the letters בבל from the beginning. *Albam* and *Atbach* were minor modifications of the same principle.

numerical value, even the words formed of letters which occupied corresponding places at the other end of the alphabet, were thought to contain a memorable meaning. Nor was this all. The utterance of any accidental words might not only prove to be unconsciously prophetic, but might even act with the potency of a spell; the tongue, though guided by apparent chance, might yet aid the workings of destiny, so that mere words, irrespective of the persons by whom, or the circumstances under which they were uttered, could evoke the powers of darkness, and unloose the bands of the earthquake and the hurricane.<sup>1</sup> And hence, since things once uttered were uttered irrevocably, the Bath Kol, or daughter of a voice—such chance words as Gideon heard in the Camp of Midian, or Jonathan at the fort of the Philistines—was accepted as a recognised method by which

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One instance will show the importance attached to a letter. In Hag. i. 8, speaking of the second Temple, the words occur: 'I will take pleasure in it, and will be glorified (וְאֶפְרָח);' now in this latter word the letter ה is omitted at the end, and as ה stands for five, the Jews insisted that the second Temple would consequently in *five* respects be inferior to the glory of the first; and so they reckon up *five* things, and five only (the Ark, the Shechinah, the Urim and Thummim, the holy fire, and the spirit of prophecy), which were lacking to it. The same spirit of interpretation lasted far on into Christian times. Thus, since the Greek letter τ stands for 300, Clemens saw a symbol of the Cross ('the mystical Tau,' *φασιν οὖν εἶναι τοῦ μὲν κυριακοῦ σημείου τύπον*) in the 300 cubits of the Ark; and since the letters τη stand for 318, they saw, in Abraham's 318 servants, the cross and the first two letters of the name of Jesus (τὸ δὲ ἰῶτα καὶ τὸ ἥτα τοῦτομα σημαίνει τὸ σωτήριον.—Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. 11. 84). It is remarkable that the mark set upon the foreheads of those who are to be preserved alive (Ezek. ix. 4, 6) is יה, a sign of life like the Egyptian *crux ansata*.

<sup>1</sup> 'Tis but a word,' object—

A gesture—he regards thee as our lord  
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,  
 Looked at us,—dost thou mind?—when being young  
 We both would unadvisedly recite  
 Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,  
 Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst  
 All into stars.—Browning, *Epistle of Karshish*.

God sometimes made known his will; it was, in fact, regarded as the fourth grade of special revelation. When the Rabbis Jonathan and Simeon were on the point of visiting their friend the Rabbi Samuel, who lived in Babylon, they thought it ample reason to abstain from the journey, because, as they passed by a school, they heard a boy reading aloud the words, 'And Samuel died;' and when the Rabbis Jonah and Jose were on the point of journeying to the Rabbi Acha, who was sick, they felt sure that he would not die, because they heard one woman ask another, 'Is the lamp extinguished?' to which she replied, 'Let not the lamp of Israel be put out.'<sup>1</sup>

4. Nothing resembling Philology could of course be expected from a nation which took this solely superstitious view of words; and yet it was a similar view which enlisted the sympathy of many eminent Greek philosophers. For

<sup>1</sup> Otho, *Lex. Rabbin.* s. v. Bath Kol. Buxtorf, *Lex. Talm.* s. v. **בַּת**. The view was by no means peculiarly Jewish.—See Herod. ix. 90 (where the good omen of the name Hegesistratos decided Leotychides to assist the Samians, and led to the battle of Mycale); Liv. v. 50 (where the accidental '*hic manebimus optime*' of a centurion settled the dispute about removing the seat of government to Veii). Every one will remember the Pythia's *ὦ παῖ, ἀνικατός ἐστι*, used in reply to Alexander's importunity. Two interesting anecdotes of a similar character are told by Cicero, *De Div.* i. 46. L. Paullus, while at war with King Perses (or Persa), seeing his little girl sad, asked her the reason, and she replied, 'Mi pater, Persa periit. Tum ille arctius puellam complexus, *Accipio*, inquit, *mea filia, omen*; erat autem mortuus catellus eo nomine.' Again, when Cecilia went to seek an omen about her niece's marriage, no omen came till the girl, tired of standing, asked her aunt to give her room to sit down. '*Vero, mea puella, tibi concedo meas sedes*,' said Cecilia, 'quod omen res consecuta est. Ipsa enim brevi mortua est; virgo autem nupsit, cui Cæcilia nupta fuerat.' Again, when Crassus was starting on his fatal Parthian expedition, the army noticed with dread that a man was crying Caunian figs for sale, and that *Cauneas* sounded fatally like *cave ne eas*.—*De Div.* ii. 40. Many modern instances might be mentioned, especially in the lives of religious men like Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Simeon, &c. Napoleon, on hearing of the loss of the djerm *l'Italie*, declared to his officers, 'My presentiments never deceive me; Italy is lost.'

nearly 1,000 years of thought, the main question which divided all who entered upon grammatical speculation was the formula, which to us seems almost meaningless—Did words originate by Nature or by Convention? were their form and significance determined by inward necessity or by arbitrary caprice? Have words any abstract fitness, any inherent force, or are they mere accidental labels, conveniently attached to the things we wish to mention? Those who argued that words were *natural* were called Analogists; those who held that they were due to convention were called Anomalists.<sup>1</sup> Neither disputants could be said to have contributed much to the subject of *Language*, although they furnished valuable contributions to Logic and Psychology. Even the *Cratylus* of Plato, rich as it is in metaphysical subtlety, has a merely historic value for the philological student; and the etymologies in which it abounds are, like those of the Greeks in general, nearly always untenable, sometimes utterly absurd.<sup>2</sup> This was indeed inevitable among a people which, however acute, scorned to become acquainted with any language but their own,<sup>3</sup> and which, classing all other nations under the one contemptuous epithet of ‘barbarians,’<sup>4</sup> failed even to dis-

<sup>1</sup> The whole subject is exhaustively treated by Lersch, *Sprach-philosophie der Alten*.

<sup>2</sup> As where he derives *θεός* from *θέειν*, *to run*, because the first deities were the sun, moon, and planets.—*Crat.* 397 c.

<sup>3</sup> It is a remarkable fact that even so great a man as Apollonius Dyskolos, devoting his life to grammatical studies, does not take the slightest notice either of Latin, or of any other foreign language. See the admirable monograph of M. Egger, *Apoll. Dyscole*, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Πᾶς μὴ Ἑλλήν βαρβαρος* is the proverb quoted by Servius (*ad Virg. Æn.* ii. 504). In Rom. i 14, Luther translates *βάρβαροι* by *Ungriechen*. The word is an onomatopœia for unintelligible sounds. Not that this ignorant contempt for all other nations was at all confined to the Greeks. It has been found in nearly all nations. Indeed the very word ‘barbarian’ was possibly borrowed by the Greeks from the Egyptians (*Hdt.* ii. 158, cf. ‘Berber’). The Indian Aryans called the aborigines *Mlecchas* (indistinct speakers); the Hebrews called all Gentiles *גוֹיִם* or ‘stammerers;’ and in such names as *Zamzummin* they intended to

cover that the language of their great enemies the Persians belonged to the same family of speech as that which they spoke themselves. In point of fact, the science of Language, like the natural sciences, depends solely on minute and laborious observation, and therefore it belongs to this century alone, because in this alone have languages been etymologically scrutinised and grammatically compared.

Although, however, *comparative* philology was unknown to the ancient world, yet *philology* in a more special sense—i.e. grammatical study of the phenomena of single languages—was carried by them to a considerable extent. The sophist Protagoras distinguished the moods of verbs, and woke the laughter of Aristophanes by calling attention to the anomalies of verbal gender.<sup>1</sup> Plato—and it seems strange that centuries should have elapsed before so very simple an exercise of analysis—seems to have been the first to distinguish accurately between nouns and verbs.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle added the conjunction and the article. The Stoics

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satirise the jargon of hideous reduplications which the aboriginal language of Palestine presented to their ears; similarly *Deutsch* means 'clear of speech,' but *Wälsch* (Vlah, Wallachian, &c.) means 'confused.' On the other hand, Slavs (=the speakers) called the Germans *Niemec*, or 'dumb' (cf. ἀγλωσσοσ). A large number of similar national designations has been collected by Pott, *Die Zigeuner*, ii. 339; *Ungl. der menschl. Rassen*, 70. 'Nous trouvons que dans les langues les plus anciennes, les mots qui servent à désigner les peuples étrangers se tirent de deux sources: ou de verbes qui signifient *bégayer*, *balbutier*, ou de mots qui signifient *muét*.'—Renan, *Orig. du Lang.* p. 179.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aristoph. *Nub.* 660–682. Had the Γραμματικὴ τραγωδία of the comedian Kallias come down to us, we should probably have found many witticisms of the same character. But grammar and logic were deeply indebted to the much-abused Sophists, whose discoveries in these sciences have survived by centuries the comic sneers of their deriders.

<sup>2</sup> Plat. *Crat.* § 88; Arist. *Poet.* 20. 'It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a *noun* and a *verb*, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear.'—'Jack Cade,' *Henry VI.* 2nd Part, iv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> To this school more than to any other we are indebted for the foundations of scientific grammar. Chrysippus especially wrote volumi-



adopted the division of the eight parts of speech. The Alexandrian grammarians, devoting to the text of Homer a study almost as earnest and devout as the Jews to the Scriptures, and the Brahmins to the Vedas, amassed, though for the most part in a very crude and uninteresting manner, immense catalogues of grammatical and dialectic facts. At length Rome began to snatch at the sceptre which was falling from the enfeebled hand of her sister Greece. The intercourse between the two people increased. Grammar became necessary to teach the young Roman a language which formed the main part of his intellectual training. The supply soon followed the demand. The philosopher Crates (an eminent grammarian of the Anomalist school, and at one time chief librarian of Pergamus), while staying at Rome (B.C. 157), on an embassy from King Attalus II., broke his leg by stumbling over a grating, and spent the period of his recovery in giving lectures (ἀκροάσεις) on grammar to the most distinguished men at Rome.<sup>1</sup> They took up and continued the study for many years with immense enthusiasm; and even the great Cæsar himself, at the very moment he was conquering the Gauls, delighted

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nously on the subject. Most of what is really valuable in the writings of the old grammarians has now been incorporated into grammar; but it is one of the merits of Harris (in his *Hermes*, 1751) to have called attention to their writings.

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, *Lectures*, i. 109. For some time the grammatical teachers at Rome were Greeks. The first who seem to have compared Latin and Greek were Tyrannion the younger, in the time of Augustus, who treated Latin as a dialect of Greek (περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς διαλέκτου ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐκ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς); and Philoxenus in the reign of Tiberius, on whose works there is an excellent little pamphlet by Kleist (*De Philoxeni Grammatici stud. etymologicis*, 1865). In their general conclusion (which may be said to have lasted down to very recent times) Hypsicrates had anticipated them. At least, so we must infer from the scanty notices of him in Aul. Gell. *Noct. Att.* xvi. 13, and Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* iv. 21. Erroneous as their conclusions were, these comparisons of Greek and Latin are the earliest efforts of comparative philology.—See Benfey, *Gesch. der Sprachw.* p. 148; Lersch, *Sprachphil. der Alten*, iii. 167.

to spend the winter evenings in his tent in writing a treatise on grammatical analogy. This treatise he dedicated to Cicero, and in it he achieved the honour, which perhaps no other emperor has ever enjoyed, of having succeeded in adding a new word to language<sup>1</sup>—for he invented the term ‘ablative case.’ The study of Varro and Quintilian is still fruitful; and the line of Latin grammarians culminated in Donatus and Priscian, who laid the foundations of grammar as it was taught, not only throughout the Middle Ages,<sup>2</sup> but even (alas!) down to the present day.

But although the pursuit of classical philology, continued as it was for nearly two millennia, laid solid and durable foundations for the future science of language, and although the comparative philologist cannot but still feel the profoundest respect for the stupendous learning and critical acumen of such classical giants as Heinsius, Salmasius, Gronovius, Muretus, Casaubon, and Bentley, yet all their labours were devoted, as M. Baudry has well observed,<sup>3</sup> to the ‘*architecture* rather than to the *chemistry* of language’—that is, to the *usage*, and not to the *analysis* of words.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Sueton. *De Illustr. Gramm.* Capito is said to have remarked to the Emperor Tiberius, ‘Tu enim Cæsar civitatem dare potes hominibus, verbis non potes.’ Claudius tried in vain to introduce his new letter *antisigma* (Priscian, i., *De Literarum Numero*, &c.); and ‘Augustus himself, in possession of that power which rules the world, acknowledged that he could not make a new Latin word.’ (Locke, *Ess. on Hum. Und.* vol. iii. p. 2, 8.)

<sup>2</sup> Hence a *donet* was, as every one knows, the synonym for a grammar, and so it came to mean the elements of any subject: as in *Piers Ploughman’s Vision*. ‘Penne I drouȝ me among þis drapers My *Donet* to leorne.’ The title of one of Bishop Pecocke’s books was *The Donat into Christian Religion*, and Cotgrave quotes a French proverb, ‘Les diables estoient encore à leur *Donat*.’ See Dr. Smith’s *Dict. of Mythol.* s. v. Donatus.

<sup>3</sup> *De la science du Langage et de son état actuel*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Yet many general philosophical facts and inferences of the utmost importance may be found scattered throughout the long-obsolete labours of eminent scholars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Of the many books briefly noticed by Benfey (*Gesch. der Sprachw.* p. 205–312), the following were among the most important:—

laws of etymology continued to be utterly unknown, and the only theories on language in general were to the last degree erroneous, because they were influenced by a false theological bias which absorbed them in the attempt to prove that all languages were deduced from the Hebrew. A single specimen may serve to show how hopelessly and grotesquely absurd was the method of inquiry. Guichard in his *Harmonie étymologique* tried to show that it was easy to derive Greek from Hebrew if you read all Greek words backwards, and that this style of etymology was quite reasonable, since Hebrew was read from right to left!<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a purely philosophic grammar—a grammar

Jul. Cæsar Scaliger, *De causis linguæ Latinæ*, 1540; Sanctius, *Minerva, seu de causis linguæ Latinæ*, 1587; Bibliander, *De communi ratione omnium literarum et linguarum*, 1548; Gessner, *Mithridates. De differentiis linguarum*, 1558; G. J. Voss, *Aristarchus, sive de arte grammatica*, 1635; Ménage, *Dict. étymol. de la Langue française*, 1650; Job Ludolf, *Gramm. et Lexicon Æthiop.* 1661; Hadr. Reland, *Dissertationes Miscellanæ*, 1706. Of more recent works of the eighteenth century, not otherwise alluded to in the text, we may mention: De Brosses, *Traité de la formation mécanique des Langues*, 1765; Court de Gébelin, *Hist. naturelle de la Parole*, 1774; Lord Monboddo, *Origin and Progress of Language*, 1773; Harris, *Hermes, or a philosoph. enquiry concerning Language*, 1751; Horne Tooke, *Ἑπεα πτερόεντα, or The Diversions of Purley*, 1786; *Linguarum totius orbis Vocabularia comparativa*; *Augustissimæ* (Cath. II.) *curæ collecta*, 1787. The mere names of later works on this subject would fill a volume. At the head of the list might well have been placed the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* of Dante, which rendered an immense service to the Italian language. Dante was acquainted with no fewer than fourteen dialects.

<sup>1</sup> 'Quant à la dérivation des mots par addition, subtraction, transposition et inversion des lettres, il est certain que cela se peut et doit ainsi faire, si on veut trouver les étymologies. Ce qui n'est point difficile à croire, si nous considérons que les Hébreux écrivent de la droite à la senestre, et les Grecs et autres de la senestre à la droite.'—*Harm. étymol.* Préf. Almost any page of this extraordinary book will show the chaotic state of etymology at the period when it was written (1610). Thus (p. 19), he derives from the Hebrew word אוּבַל, *ubhal*, not only the Latin *palus*, and the Greek πύλη and βηλός, but adds, 'peut estre aussi que de אוּבַל, *valva* a esté dérivé, par transposition des radicales, porta.

which, from the comparison of various languages, should discover and illustrate the true principles of a *perfect* language—had presented itself to the great mind of Bacon. Rejecting the etymological mysticism of the *Cratylus*, he says that the noblest form of grammar would be one which could only be written by some one who was thoroughly learnt in many tongues, both polished and unpolished, and who could treat of the excellences and deficiencies of each, framing from them all some form of speech, which, like the Venus of Apelles, should be a combination of all beauties. Such a grammar would, he says, deduce the moral and intellectual peculiarities of nations from the characteristics of their languages. Cicero, from the absence of any Greek equivalent for the Latin *ineptus*, infers that among the Greeks such frivolity was so universal as to escape recognition. Similarly from the power of framing compounds in Greek, and the diminution of such power in Latin, it might at once be inferred that the Romans were great in *action* and the Greeks in *art*; while from the almost total absence of all compounds in Hebrew, together with the paucity and isolation of their words, we might at once perceive that they were Nazarites among the nations. Again, he appeals to the synthetic character of ancient languages, compared with the analysis which distinguishes their modern representatives, as a proof of the greater acuteness and stability of the ancient intellect.<sup>1</sup> ‘Innumera sunt ejusmodi,’ he continues, ‘quæ justum volumen complere possint. Non abs re igitur fuerit grammaticam philosophantem a simplici et literaria distinguere, et desideratam ponere.’<sup>2</sup>

Nor is this all. Proceeding to assign to the province of grammar all inquiries into the sound, quantity, and accent

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<sup>1</sup> We need hardly add that the inference is erroneous. See *Origin of Language*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, vi. 1. *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii.: ‘The duty of it (Grammar) is of two natures, the one popular, . . . the other philosophical, examining the power and nature of words as they are the footsteps and prints of reason.’

of words, except so far as the sound is a purely physiological matter, he says that by 'sound' he here means the laws of grammatical euphony, which laws are of two kinds—viz., 1. Those that are *common*, since all languages to a certain extent avoid the hiatus of vowels or the concurrence of too many consonants; and, 2. Those which are *special*. 'Greek, for instance, abounds in diphthongs; Latin has far fewer; Spanish dislikes the *tenuēs* (p, k, t), and changes them into *medials* (b, g, d); Gothic, and the languages derived from it, delight in aspirates. Many similar instances might be mentioned, but perhaps even these are more than enough.' Of Bacon, more than of any other writer, it may be said that 'in the very dust of his writings there is gold;' and in this passing remark we see that he had already observed with interest both the *mechanism* of speech and those regular permutations of letters in different linguistic families, from which, by an immense induction, Jacob Grimm established the famous law which is one of the most memorable discoveries of modern philology.

Such anticipations of modern inquiry, even by so great an intellect as that of Bacon, are sufficiently remarkable; but the first real prophet of the new science was the immortal Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz, born at Leipzig, July 3, 1646. Theologian, physicist, mathematician, historian, philologist, statesman, metaphysician, *nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*. He was one of those men who, like Roger Bacon, like Abelard, like Francis Bacon, like the Marquis of Worcester, seem to have appeared two centuries before their time, and to have mounted Pisgah heights from which they could clearly see lands which neither they nor any of their coevals were destined to enter. As for the philology of his age—*lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*. Rejecting the Hebraic<sup>1</sup> theory which was at that time, an d

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<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the ridiculous etymologies of Goropius Becanus (which originated the word *goropiser*), he yet speaks with approval of his theory, that Hebrew has no signs of being a primitive language, and could not have been the language of Paradise.

had been for centuries, the great stumbling-block in the path of philology, he was the first to see that linguistic science was as exact as any other, and therefore should only be studied on the same principles and by the same methods as any of the natural sciences. Instead of forming theories, he strove to collect facts. In his *Collectanea Etymologica*, in his correspondence with Ludolf, in his 'Essays on the Human Understanding,' and in many other works, he rendered repeated services to the science of language—a science which awoke his most ardent interest. Why, he asked, should we commence with the unknown instead of the known? We ought obviously to begin with the modern languages which are close at hand, in order to compare them together, to note their affinities and differences, and so proceeding to their *immediate* predecessors to show their filiation and origin, and to mount finally, step by step, to the most ancient, the analysis of which may alone conduct us to acceptable conclusions. In following out the method which he had sketched with so much wisdom and prescience, he not only strove to arouse the interest of travellers, scholars, and missionaries, but also, in a celebrated letter written October 26, 1713, he urged Peter the Great to have the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments translated into all the languages of his dominions, 'that every tongue,' as he expressed it, 'might praise the Lord.' Such a plan, he argued, 'would tend to the glory of your Majesty, lord of so many nations, and deeply interested in their amelioration; it would enable us, by a comparison of languages, to discover the origin of the nations which, starting from Scythia, a portion of your Majesty's dominions, have invaded the Western countries; and, above all, it would further the extension of the Christian religion among the nations which speak those languages.' Peter the Great had neither the leisure nor the literary insight to secure the accomplishment of this proposal, but seventy-two years afterwards Catherine II. warmly embraced the plan, and when she could find no leisure to carry it out in person,

intrusted its completion to Professor Pallas, and watched its progress with the deepest interest. She had a number of test words in Latin, French, German, and Russian distributed among scholars, ambassadors, travellers, &c., to be rendered into as many languages as possible. The result was the publication of a comparative glossary of no fewer than 272 languages of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; and, little as they knew how to use the collection after it had been amassed, Catherine, from the study of it, had the acuteness to observe how various were the symbols for the same thing in different languages—how ‘heaven’ was in one language ‘vault,’ in another, ‘cloud,’ in another, ‘breadth;’ and how God was sometimes expressed by goodness or loftiness, sometimes by sun or fire. The transcription into Russian letters, the unfortunate choice of the words, and the total neglect of grammatical inquiry, greatly diminished the value of the undertaking. Nevertheless, it produced some valuable results, and the task of the imperial votaress was followed by others. In 1800 appeared the *Catalogo de las Lenguas* of the Spanish Jesuit missionary Lorenzo Hervás, and in 1806 the *Mithridates* of Adelung, completed after his death (for he began this astonishing work at the age of 74) by Vater, and finally by the younger Adelung in 1817, the year after the publication of the *Conjugations-System* by Bopp. Partly, perhaps, from the extreme unsuitability of the Lord’s Prayer<sup>1</sup> for versions of this kind, these voluminous and laborious works led to no practical discoveries of any value. Adelung himself called them ‘*Curiositäten-Cabinette*,’ and felt that he must ‘leave much to a better future.’ His labours served no other purpose than to keep alive some interest in the subject, and to give currency to a few ingenious generalisations. They were, as Prof. Max

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<sup>1</sup> Schildberger in his travels had given two specimens of the Lord’s Prayer, in Armenian and Turkish (1427), but the first of the *Vater-unsere Sammlungen* was a specimen of the Lord’s Prayer in five languages in *Linguarum duodecim introductio*, by Gul. Portellus. 1538.

Müller<sup>1</sup> observes, the separate molecules floating about without cohesion, awaiting for their regular crystallisation the flash of some electric spark.

Two years after, the thrill came, for the year 1808<sup>2</sup> may be fixed on as the year of the discovery of Sanskrit. Now what do we mean by the discovery of Sanskrit? We mean that up to this time there had appeared to be an absolute distinction of race and sympathy between the inhabitants of Hindostan and the whole world of Western civilisation, when suddenly attention was drawn to a certain dead language in which were enshrined the sacred Vedas of the Brahmins, and which, though it had been dead for more than three thousand years, was obviously the direct source of all the main modern dialects of the Hindoos; and it was found that this language presented the closest and most remarkable affinities, not only to the Persian, which was conterminous with it, but even to all the main languages of Europe, from the volcanic plains of Iceland and the bleak fiords of Norway down to the sunny bays of Italy and Greece. At first this appeared so unaccountable, so absolutely incredible, so subversive of all that had hitherto been believed, that the fact was either stoutly denied, or it was asserted that any coincidences between Greek for instance and Sanskrit were simply due to a few accidental words which had got currency after the conquests of Alexander. But after the year 1808 it was impossible for any candid mind to be contented with so inadequate an explanation of the known facts. In that memorable year—which was also the year of Porson's death—Colebrooke published his edition of the *Amara-kosha*, Wilkins his *Sanskrit Grammar*, Schlegel his *Essay on the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, and Prichard his work on *The Varieties of the Human Race*. But these works were but the full dawn of which the earliest beams had shuddered through the dark-

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, i. 154 (2nd ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Donaldson fixes on this year in his valuable paper on Philology in the *Encycl. Britannica*.



ness some years before. The very first European who seems to have known the existence of Sanskrit was an Italian, Filippo Sassetti, who became acquainted with it during a residence at Goa between the years 1583-1588. 'Sono scritte le loro scienze tutte,' he says in his Letters (which were first published in Florence in 1855), 'in una lingua che chiamano SANSCRUTA, che vuol dire bene articolata.' He speaks of the antiquity, beauty, and euphony of the language, of its fifty-three elementary sounds, of his great desire for a deeper acquaintance with it, and adds, in a most remarkable passage—one of those pregnant remarks in which is involved the germ of sciences yet unborn—'e ha la lingua d' oggi molte cose comuni con quella, nella quale sono molti de' nostri nomi e particolarmente de' numeri, il 6, 7, 8, 9,<sup>1</sup> Dio, serpe, et altri assai.'<sup>2</sup> Nearly a century afterwards, in 1664, Heinrich Noth had learnt Sanskrit in India in order to dispute with the Brahmins. In 1740 a Jesuit missionary had called attention to its strikingly synthetic character. In 1776, N. B. Halhed—who in some respects may be regarded as the Copernicus of comparative philology—in the preface to his Bengali Grammar, was the first European scholar to express his astonishment to find—if I may quote his own words—'the similitude of Sanskrit words with those of Persian and Arabic, and even of Latin and Greek; and these not in technical and metaphorical terms, which the mutation of refined arts and improved manners might have occasionally introduced, but in the main groundwork of the language, in

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<sup>1</sup> Isolated observations of this kind about different Aryan languages occur not unfrequently: e.g. Salmasius noticed the resemblance between Greek, Persian, and German numerals in his *De Hellenistica Commentarius*, 1643.

<sup>2</sup> I quote these very interesting words from Benfey, *Gesch. der Sprachwissenschaft*, p. 222. This valuable and elaborate work only appeared a month after the delivery of these lectures, but I have occasionally made use of it in preparing them for publication. I should add, however, that in not a few instances I had previously consulted the same authorities as Benfey and made the same extracts from them.

monosyllables, in the names of numbers, and the appellations of such things as would be first discriminated on the immediate dawn of civilisation.<sup>1</sup> The torch of knowledge was now well alight, and it was snatched eagerly by many hands.<sup>2</sup> If Halhed was the Copernicus of philology, the learned, industrious, and amiable Sir W. Jones may well be called its Galileo. The germs of Comparative Philology may be found in the following remarkable passage of his paper in the *Asiatic Researches* (i. 422): 'The Sanskrit language, whatever may be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, *yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could have been produced by accident*; so strong that no philologer could examine all the three *without believing them to have sprung from some common source which perhaps no longer exists*. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and the Celtic, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit. The old Persian may be added to the same family.'<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The words 'and Arabic' in this quotation rather spoil it, since they confuse a Semitic language with Aryan languages which have no resemblance to it either in grammar or vocabulary.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Monboddo, however, in his quaint style complains of the immense preference accorded to the natural sciences. 'The learned of this age,' he says, 'though they be so much occupied with the facts of natural history, plants, minerals, flies, and reptiles, that they have no time to apply to the history and philosophy of their own species: yet I should think they would have some curiosity about an art so exceedingly useful, by which the whole business of human life is carried on; . . . and without which they could not have been instructed in the knowledge they value so much; *for how else could they profit by the most accurate account of insects which Réaumur has given in six volumes in quarto, containing the history of flies with two wings and flies with four wings, with a supplement to the history of flies with two wings*, but which he very modestly entitles, not a history, but only *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des Insectes*?'—Monboddo, iii. p. v.

<sup>3</sup> Both Halhed and Sir William Jones had probably (unknown to themselves) been anticipated in their discovery by many whose names

progress of the study was now wonderfully rapid, and tended entirely to substantiate these remarkable and prescient conclusions. In 1784 Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society. In 1785 a young merchant, Mr. Wilkins, translated the Bhagavadgîtâ, and in 1787 the Hitopadeśa.<sup>1</sup> In 1789 the publication of the Śakuntalâ by Sir William Jones showed what pearls might be fetched from this unknown sea of literature. From 1805, Colebrooke—perhaps the greatest and most profound of our Sanskrit scholars—began a long series of valuable publications, and, among many other eminent services to science, gave to Europe the first full and accurate information on the subject of the Vedas. In 1802, Alexander Hamilton, a young English officer on his way home from India, was seized in Paris, among other *détenus*, by one of the most infamous and arbitrary acts which stain the name of Napoleon. Happily in this instance, however, this most inexcusable barbarism in modern warfare was overruled into a blessing to European civilisation. For during his long and unwilling detention, Hamilton taught Sanskrit to M. de Chézy, who became the first professor of the language in Europe, and to Frederic Schlegel, whose glowing and eloquent *Essay On the*

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are unrecorded. We have already seen the striking remarks of Filippo Sassetti in 1583. In 1767 Father Cœurdoux, a French Jesuit in Pondicherry, had written a letter to the Abbé Barthélemy calling attention to the question: 'D'où vient que dans la langue samscroutane il se trouve un grand nombre de mots qui lui sont communs avec le latin et le grec, et surtout avec le latin?' The latter words were added to preclude the answer that such similarities were due to Greek influences subsequent to the conquests of Alexander. He gives lists of pronouns, numerals, interrogatives, &c., and notices that the dual, the syllabic augment, and a privative are found in Sanskrit no less than in Greek, from which facts he infers the original affinity of Greeks, Latins, and Hindoos. Unfortunately Anquetil du Perron, to whom Barthélemy handed the letter, seems to have attached no importance to it, and it was not published till after his death in 1808. See Bopp, *Gram. Comp.* par M. Bréal, I. xvii.

<sup>1</sup> He was the first to print in Sanskrit, and he actually constructed and cast his own types.

*Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, by its poetry and enthusiasm, effectually aroused the attention of every cultivated mind. Later on, M. de Chézy gave lessons to the lamented Eugène Burnouf, and to Franz Bopp,<sup>1</sup> whose *Conjugations-System*, published in 1816, and his *Comparative Grammar* in 1833,<sup>2</sup> founded a new epoch in literature, and in the direction and development of human thought. Three years after, in 1819, Grimm, the Kepler of etymology, published the first part of that magnificent Teutonic Grammar, in which he stated, proved, and developed the laws which determine the interchanges of sound in various Aryan languages, and so founded a new branch of etymology which up to his time was in danger of constant death from a 'plethora of probabilities.' In the same year Professor Wilson published the first Sanskrit and English Lexicon, and since then the work has been pursued with ardour by an army of toilers. The fine genius of Schlegel, the large inductive spirit of Bopp, the splendid historical knowledge and patriotism of the brothers Grimm, the deep thought and philosophic insight of Wilhelm von Humboldt, the almost incredible industry and inexhaustible knowledge of Pott, have built the foundations of the new science on the broadest and securest bases. A younger generation of workers, not unworthy of such immortal predecessors, has

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<sup>1</sup> So M. Chézy says, but it seems to be doubtful, since Bopp in the preface to his *Nala* (Lond. 1819, p. 3) says, that he taught himself Sanskrit without assistance. Bensley, *ubi sup.* 372.

<sup>2</sup> The original title of Bopp's *Comparative Grammar* in 1833 was '*Vergleichende Grammatik des Sanskrit, Zend, Griechischen, Lateinischen, Lithauischen, Gothischen, und Deutschen.*' In the edition of 1856-1861 '*Armenischen*' was added after *Zend*, and *Altslawischen* after *Lithauischen*. No better choice of Aryan languages, for the purposes of Comparative Philology, could have been made, since they included the oldest or the most important and best preserved languages of the main Aryan branches, viz.: Indian, Iranian, Hellenic, Italic, Slavonic, and Teutonic. Lithuanian, though not representing a large division, preserves the original forms so uncorrupt, that it is fully as important for linguistic purposes as languages which are, chronologically more ancient.

continued the task. Philology has won the willing services of scholars like Lassen, Benfey, and Weber, and Kuhn and Aufrecht, and Goldstücker, and Schleicher, and Steinthal, and Eichhoff, and Bréal, and Renan, and Chavée ; and last, but not least, of Professor Max Müller, by whose lectures, so original, so eloquent, and so full of genius, an impulse has been given in England to linguistic pursuits, which will, I hope, ultimately produce workers among us, especially among young students, and among those who are gifted with the inestimable blessings of leisure and the love of toil, such as may save England from the discredit of failing and lagging behind in the splendid torch-race which she, most undoubtedly, had the honour to begin.<sup>1</sup>

So then we arrived at a discovery indicated and rendered possible by English energy, deepened and defined by German science and enthusiasm, extended and illustrated by French intelligence and skill. Let us pause at this point to indicate some of the results of this discovery, results of which it is almost impossible to overrate the importance or the interest for those who feel a noble curiosity respecting the past history and future destinies of the human race.

First of all, then, the Hindoos had worked out from an entirely opposite point of view, the linguistic studies which had occupied the Greeks. The Greeks had minutely recorded the *functions* of words, the Hindoos had laboriously examined their *form*. The Greeks, says M. Bréal, had studied the philosophy of speech, the Hindoos its chemistry and natural history.<sup>2</sup> Among the Greeks all sense of the fact that their apparently dead inflections were once living verbal elements was entirely lost ; they had not

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<sup>1</sup> German writers point with pardonable pride to the fact that for nearly fifty years the profound study of Comparative Philology has been almost exclusively confined to their countrymen. Even in other countries Germans are the most prominent supporters of the science, as Max Müller in England, Oppert in France, Budenz in Hungary, Bleek in South Africa, &c. Benfey, *Gesch. der Sprachwissenschaft*. 15.

<sup>2</sup> M. Mich. Bréal, *De la forme et de la fonction des Mots*.

a conception that there was anything but arbitrary caprice in the 1,200 little different terminations which were requisite to express the mood and tense changes of their own verb. But the Hindoos had better preserved the history of their language, and therefore they had succeeded in carrying out a most minute analysis of its constituent elements. The name for grammar in Sanskrit (*vyākaraṇa*) means analysis. An eminent philologist has said that next to the Vedas, the grammars are the most original things in Sanskrit literature. In this instance, superstition, the deadliest enemy of science, has rendered her an unconscious service. This touching fidelity of preservation, this luxury of minute precautions, was all due to a sacred zeal. We should read with silent amazement the names and number of the Sanskrit grammarians, and the extraordinary voluminousness of their works, if we did not know that the labours of them all, from Pāṇini downwards, were devoted to preserve for the delicate ears of their countrymen the pronunciation of a language, the very name of which means 'the perfect,'<sup>1</sup> and which was the shrine of utterances which they believed to be directly miraculous.<sup>2</sup> And it increases our amazement to know that so much was done without an alphabet, which long after it had been adopted from the East was regarded as an impiety. Even as far back as the Rig-veda we read of Vâch, the goddess of language, and it is not too much to say that the entire laws of phonetics and the permutation of letters—the very bases therefore of all etymology, and of all rational grammar—are due to the discovery of Sanskrit. In these days the merest tiro ought to know, and it is to be hoped that, in spite of the sterility of our grammatical teaching,<sup>3</sup> he soon will know, facts of the deepest interest

<sup>1</sup> The word *Sanskrita* or *Samskrita* is made up of the preposition *sam* (= *σύν*, *con*), 'together,' and the passive participle *kṛita*, 'made.' . . . The compound means 'carefully constructed,' 'symmetrically formed.'—Monier Williams' *Sanskrit Grammar*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, iv. 14.

<sup>3</sup> It is a discreditable fact, but it most assuredly is a fact, that in the days of Bopp and Steinthal and Schleicher, much of our so-called gram-

and the most beautiful simplicity about Greek and Latin—facts which treble their interest, which lighten up all their difficulties, and change their anomalies into illustrations of curious and valuable laws. For what has the discovery of Sanskrit done for grammar? It has taught us *the essentially important distinction between the material and the formal element of words*, i.e. between the root, stem, inflective base, or what the Hindoos called the *aṅga* or body of the word, and those little syllables, mainly the *débris* of pronouns or of auxiliaries, hitherto deemed an absolute mystery, by means of which we express the mutual relations of ideas, ‘which by the elasticity of their meaning lent themselves to every modification of the main conception, and by the fluidity of their form adapted themselves to every species of combination; which are the direct sources of that richness, clearness, and liberty of idiom which characterise Greek and Latin, and which by their plasticity have given to words the appearance of organised bodies, carrying in themselves the principle of their own development.’<sup>1</sup>

It is true that by a splendid guess, our own countryman Horne Tooke had, in his *Diversions of Purley*,<sup>2</sup> stated with the utmost distinctness his belief in the fact that the terminations of nouns and verbs in declension and conjugation ‘are themselves separate words with distinct meanings.’ ‘These terminations,’ he says, ‘are all explicable, and ought

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matrical teaching is even more empty and infructuous than if we had been living in the days of Sanctius. It is to be hoped that the recent changes in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge may gradually produce a race of scholars and teachers not one of whom shall remain contented with the poor attempt—an attempt which so generally fails—to hammer into the heads of unwilling pupils a crude mass of forms and inflections respecting the very nature of which the boys continue to be, from first to last, as ignorant as their teachers. I have seen a good many foreign grammars, and have heard and seen something of grammatical teaching in foreign schools, and I doubt whether any grammars are so bad as most of ours, or any grammatical teaching so narrow and meaningless as that which passes for such in English schools.

<sup>1</sup> Part II. ch. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Bréal, Bopp, *Gram. Comp.* II. xxviii.

all to be explained, or'—he adds, with a contemptuous allusion to the *Hermes*, in which terminations were supposed to have arisen from convention,—‘there will be no end of such fantastical writers as this Mr. Harris, who takes fustian for philosophy.’ In answer to the question ‘Is not the Latin *ibo* an assertion?’ he replies, ‘*Yes indeed is it, and in three letters: but those three letters contain three words: two verbs and a pronoun.*’ Bopp himself could not have enunciated the fact more decisively, and there is no doubt that, before the rise of Comparative Philology, Tooke’s genius had led him to anticipate one of its most remarkable conclusions; but unfortunately, the arguments which he offered in proof of his position were for the most part thoroughly erroneous. In asserting that case, gender, number, are no parts of a noun, and mood, tense, person, number, no parts of a verb, but in each instance *separate words expressive of these accompanying circumstances*—words whose separate signification has merely been lost sight of from their constant coalescence with the nouns or verbs—he was enunciating a discovery which should have won him immortal honour; but it seemed even easier to believe with Harris that they were purely artificial, than to believe (for instance) that *ibo* was a compound of *i*, *βούλομαι*, and *ego*. Hence, long afterwards, Schlegel considered that flexions were spontaneous creations of the intellect, and even Grimm spoke of them as a mysterious element. Horne Tooke was before his age. Every one can speak of the many groundless hypotheses and demonstrable errors of the *Diversions of Purley*; but few have done justice to the eminent philological ability of its author. It has remained for a modern German<sup>1</sup> to admit that had Horne Tooke been acquainted with Sanskrit he might have taken a foremost position among the greatest of philologists. The discovery of that language *demonstrated* what he had *conjectured*.

Then, secondly, the discovery of Sanskrit brought the

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<sup>1</sup> Benfey, p. 310.



intellect of Europe face to face with the intellect of Hindostan. Hitherto the education and culture of Europe had been almost solely Hellenistic, but now the modern world was to receive a new impulse from its contact with the grandeur, profundity, and calm of Oriental thought. The rapture of Goethe—the subtlest and most cultivated intellect of Europe—on perusing the *Śakuntalâ*, will show how little<sup>1</sup> I exaggerate—

Willst du die Blüthe des frühern, die Früchte des späteren Jahres,  
Willst du was reizt und entzückt, willst du was sättigt und nährt,  
Willst du den Himmel, die Erde mit einem Namen begreifen,  
Nenn' ich Sakontala dir und so ist alles gesagt.

The devotion to classical literature had, at the beginning of this century, been too long continued and too exclusive; it gave to the mind of Europe a development one-sided and therefore injurious. We had learnt to confine the very meaning of the word 'antiquity' to the history of Greece and Rome; but the discovery of Sanskrit revealed to us a wholly new chapter in the history of the world's youth: it enabled us to study the infancy of our race in the first gorgeous bloom of its imaginative passions. As Schlegel wisely prophesied, the study of Oriental literature, to us so completely novel in structure and ideas, will, as we penetrate more deeply into it, bring back a new idea of the Divinity, and restore that vigour to the intellect, that truth and intensity of feeling to the soul, which invests all art, literature, and science with new and glorious life. Until the discovery of Sanskrit anything resembling a true philosophy of history was a thing impossible. Nor is this all; for the science of Comparative Mythology, which is of incalculable value for any history of the religions of mankind, and which has for the first time enabled us to see the inner significance of the

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<sup>1</sup> Compare the enthusiastic language of M. Michelet on the *Râmâyana*: 'L'année 1863 me restera chère et bénie. C'est la première où j'ai pu lire le grand poëme sacré de l'Inde, le divin *Râmâyana*.'—*Bible de l'Humanité*, p. 3.

old Greek and Roman theogonies with their vast circle of hitherto unintelligible legends, sprang immediately from the study of the sacred poems which were enshrined in this dead language of Hindostan.<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, and for the present lastly, the discovery of Sanskrit was fraught with results which may become unspeakably important to the English race. With all our energy and resourcefulness it must, I think, be confessed that as a colonising nation we have not shown that suppleness of accommodation, that sympathy of tact, which gave such marvellous stability to the conquests of Alexander and the dependencies of Rome. Wherever we have gone—strong, self-confident, defiant—we have too often carried with us our intensest prejudices, and either ignored or trampled on the profoundest and most cherished convictions of the conquered races. And the result has been that, Christians though we are,—and animated as thousands of our sons have been with a sincere desire to elevate and ameliorate the condition of the people we govern,—and chivalrous as have been the isolated acts of beneficence which not unfrequently we have bestowed on them, we have *not* succeeded in securing the loyalty, the affection, even the devotion, which pleasure-loving Greece and iron-handed Rome were often able to gain for themselves in a space of time so much more brief. It was in the very year of the hundredth anniversary of that memorable battle of Plassy which laid the corner-stone of our Indian empire, that the whole splendid edifice was rocked and shaken to its foundations by the horrors and violences of the Indian mutiny. We conquered, indeed, but we conquered by fire and sword; and every burning hamlet, and every devastated field, though it seemed but a just retribution exacted on murderers of women and boys and little children and grey-haired old

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<sup>1</sup> This most memorable fact had not escaped the keen eye of Sir William Jones, who called attention to the 'striking similitude between the chief objects of worship' in Greece, Italy, and Hindostan.—*Asiat. Research.* i. 224.

men, was yet a fatal proof that we had not understood the character, and still less had we won the affections, of the race whose hatred against us after 100 years of domination blazed no less fiercely than our indignation against them. Oh! if, instead of calling them and treating them as 'niggers;' if, instead of absorbing with such fatal facility the preposterous notion that they were, with few exceptions, an abject nation of cringing liars, to be despised and kicked, our young officers would but have learnt from the first the noble spirit of Sir John and Sir Henry Lawrence, and of Sir Herbert Edwardes, of Outram, the Bayard of India, and of him whose nickname of Clemency Canning will one day prove his most splendid memorial—if our missionaries had but tempered sometimes their righteous fanaticism of hatred against idolatry with a deeper historical knowledge of the religions of the world, the great ideas which they conceal under weird mythologies, and the traditions of hoary antiquity which they inshrine; if they could but have carried with them into their disputes with learned Brahmins, that breadth of noble reverence and tender sympathy which characterised a Heber, a Martyn, and a Cotton: nay, that thorough appreciation for the sacred sensibilities of others which was shown by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, when, in the forefront of his argument with Athenian idolaters,<sup>1</sup> he appealed to their altar '*To an unknown God*;' if our scholars had but earlier been enabled to discover, as they have now

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<sup>1</sup> It is true that to an English reader the exordium, 'I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious,' sounds somewhat blunt and harsh; but the actual words of the Apostle, *Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κατὰ πάντα ὥς δεισιδαιμονεστεροὺς ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ* ('Athenians! I observe that in all respects you are deeply reverential towards the Gods'), seem, as even Chrysostom observed, to be words rather of compliment than of blame (*ὥσπερ ἐγκωμιάζειν αὐτοὺς δοκεῖ οὐδὲν βαρὺ λέγων*), being, in fact, almost identical with the remark of Pausanias, *Attic.* 26: *Ἀθηναῖοις περισσό-τερόν τι ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐς τὰ θεῖά ἐστι σπουδῆς*. Further, there is distinct proof that during his three years' residence at Ephesus, St. Paul did not rudely and coarsely attack the worship of the Ephesian Artemis (*οὕτε βλασφημοῦντας τὴν θεὰν ὑμῶν*, Acts xix. 37).

discovered, that the glorification of Brahmins and the degradation of Sudras, and the infamous institution of suttee, and the iron network of caste, which for so many centuries has cramped the development of India, derive no sanction from the Vedas, and were no part of the ancient religion, but the invention of an arrogant and usurping sacerdotalism, or, at the very best, an erroneous tradition due to the half knowledge or to the imposture of the native pundits,—then, indeed, a military despotism would long ago have been needless for the government of India; then, indeed, the Hindoos no less than ourselves would have recognised the bond of unity between us because of the common ancestors from whose loins we both alike are sprung, and we no less than they should have seen that in coming to Hindostan with our advanced civilisation, we were returning home with splendid gifts, to visit a member of one common family, and that the meeting between us was but the meeting of Esau and Jacob after long years of separation,—who met each other with mutual affection and the kiss of peace, although from the womb it had been prophesied respecting them that ‘*the elder should serve the younger.*’

## LECTURE II.

‘L’Europe, en connaissant mieux ses véritables origines, ne comprendra-t-elle pas enfin ses véritables intérêts?’—A. REVILLE, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Feb. 1, 1864.

I MENTIONED at the conclusion of my last lecture a few of the great results which had originated in the discovery of Sanskrit. Those results were (i.) the foundation of Grammar and Etymology upon a rational basis, and thereby the means of making language an indestructible picture of the mind and genius of past races, even in their earliest and most unconscious workings ; (ii.) the contact with the poetry, philosophy, and religion of the people of Hindostan ; and (iii.) the recognition of that people as one with us in its origin and characteristics. But I have to dwell to-day on a further development of this last advantage,—the central, the most splendid, and the most memorable achievement of linguistic and philological research,—I mean the unity of the great Indo-European or Aryan race ;—the proof that all those nations which have been most memorable in the history of the past, and which must be all but universally dominant in the history of the future, sprang from one common cradle, and are closely united by identity of origin and similarity of gifts.

We are all of us old enough to remember the burst of ignorant derision and theological contempt with which the majority of unscientific Englishmen greeted the announcement of the Darwinian hypothesis. People pleasantly cracked their little jokes about ‘the sublimation of silkworms into men, and infusoria into elephants,’ and thought that they had triumphantly refuted the new theory when

they had spent their innocent and perfectly harmless witticisms on 'our great grandsire the primeval fungus.' Now, the first announcement of the Aryan unity was received with a large amount of similar incredulity, and many of my hearers must have heard the constant pun about 'the Aryan heresy' which used to amuse my friend Mr. Crawford, the late genial and learned president of the Ethnological Society. But in spite of all this doubt and ridicule, Science, as unconcerned as are the signs of Zodiac to their yearly caricatures in 'Punch's Almanac,' quietly and unconcernedly wins its way. What was at first the bold and brilliant conjecture from comparatively slight evidence of Sir William Jones, has now been proved, by half a century of magnificent and incessant labours, to be an unquestionable fact. Fifty years ago, few would have believed that Dutch, and Russian, and Icelandic, and Greek, and Latin, and Persian, and Mahratti, and French, and English, were all indubitable developments from one and the same original tongue, and that the common ancestors of the nations who speak them were—in times that may be almost called historical—in times, at any rate, the reality of which can be rigidly tested by the microscope and spectrum analysis of Philology—were living together as an undivided family in the same pastoral tents.<sup>1</sup> In the present day, no one doubts the fact, except a few intrepid theologians. When we look at the table which is before us, a table which in its remotest branches represents the treasured discoveries of devoted and laborious lives, it is but a concise statement of the astonishing truth, that we Europeans, together with the Persians and Hindoos, however wide may be the apparent and superficial differences between us, are, nevertheless, members of a close and common brotherhood in the great families of nations. First westward and northward, afterwards eastward and

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<sup>1</sup> The labours of Rask, Anquetil du Perron, and Eugène Burnouf, conclusively established the Aryan character of Zend and modern Persian; and the labours of Prichard, Zeuss, and Diefenbach, left no doubt whatever as to the Aryan origin of Celtic.

southward, the Aryans extended: they forgot the rock whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged: they became wholly ignorant of their mutual relationship; and when, in their various emigrations, they met each other—like the lion-whelps of a common lair—they met each other no longer as brothers but as foes: yet brothers they were; and now, at least, the science of language has restored to them the knowledge of this unsuspected truth. It will be happy for them if,—like brothers who are on the point of fighting, in some old drama, but who, at the last moment, recognise each other by some common token, and, laying down their swords, embrace with repentant tears,—they learn the meaning involved in this providential rediscovery of their original kinship. In former days, a fact like this might have been regarded with indifference; but now there is not a single branch of the Aryan family which is not sufficiently advanced to understand and appreciate its moral significance. In our hands—not merely as *individual* peoples, but, if we be true to our duties, as one complete, immense, and royal generation amid the kingdoms—are placed the mightiest destinies of the future. If we fulfil the work obviously pointed out to us by God, we shall *unite* in our efforts to ameliorate the entire condition of humanity: we shall rival each other only in the race of civilisation and benevolence: we shall, in the prophetic imagery of Scripture, beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning-hooks, and WAR SHALL BE NO MORE. Hitherto, too often, the footsteps of the Aryan, as he has pressed forward among the swarthy aborigines of the lands which he has taken in possession, have been footsteps dyed in blood; henceforth they should be footsteps only along the path of civilisation and science—footsteps amid happy and prosperous cities, and over plains which once supplied a precarious subsistence to handfuls of degraded savages, but which now are studded with innumerable homesteads, and stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing.

Had Philology rendered no other service than this splendid contribution to the history of mankind, she would be well worthy of our gratitude and reverence ; but although she has been the *last* and youngest sister to take her seat in the fair circle of the Sciences, let me here, for one moment, pause and digress to mention how real have been the other services which she has rendered to *them* in recompense for the *methods* which they have taught to *her*. She has not only an Archæology, but also a Geology, a Chemistry, a Physiology of her own. By facts incapable of falsification, she can not only *illustrate*, but *prove*, the vast series of years necessitated to achieve her positive results ;—with her languages and dialects she can throw light on one of the most important problems of science by showing in actual process before our eyes, the origin of linguistic species from a single genus ;—she can, with an almost infallible certainty, and with a skill not inferior to that of the comparative anatomist, reconstruct extinct and archetypal forms of language by the comparison of divergent yet closely-related dialects ;—by examining a speech subjected to foreign influences she can strikingly exemplify the phenomena of hybridism ;—pointing to an immense number of languages widely separated and mutually unintelligible, and which have existed in their present condition as far back as history can reach, she can yet prove that these species are *not* primitive ; she can show that their apparently barbarous dissonance and boundless change is the result of well-understood laws, slowly working with perfect and admirable regularity ; and she can show further the enormous influence which, without any sudden changes or violent catastrophes, can be exerted in the progress of centuries, by this continuous differentiation.<sup>1</sup> Many, in short, of the laws and tendencies which have so brilliantly rewarded the

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<sup>1</sup> We have already seen that such terms as 'dumb' or 'stammerer' were freely and reciprocally applied to each other from very early times by nations *speaking languages which were most closely related to each other*.



observation and thought of our most distinguished naturalists,—such as the struggle for existence, the importance of intermediate types, the perpetuation of accidental divergences, the powerful effect of infinitesimal changes long continued, above all, the beautiful law of analogy, the law which shows that there is ‘perpetual unity in perpetual variety’—may not only be abundantly illustrated, but positively confirmed, by the researches of the philologist into dead and existing tongues. No vivisection is needed; few errors are possible. The study of language is, indeed, a sort of morbid anatomy, yet it demonstrates with unfailing accuracy the living processes which have taken place.<sup>1</sup> While we watch the growth and decay of human dialects we seem to be standing as silent but permitted spectators in the great laboratory in which nature presides over the mighty processes of life and death.

Long as a multitude of these Aryan languages had been known throughout the civilised world, and often as separate members of the family had been set side by side, centuries elapsed before the fact of their common origin, as one distinct and separate Realm of Speech, had been even suspected; and so erroneous were the hypotheses into the service of which Philology was impressed, and so unscientific the methods by which she worked, that the fact would certainly have never been demonstrated but for the discovery in India of that dead language, the Sanskrit, which in its sacred and venerated literature preserves to us one of the purest and most antique forms of the ancient mother-tongue. We may often observe children of a common family, who, at first sight, seem wholly unlike each other, and yet in whose faces we instantly detect a marked family resemblance, when we meet one or other of their parents. Now, this is very much what happened in the discovery of the Aryan unity. Sanskrit was not indeed the actual mother-

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<sup>1</sup> I have developed this subject in a paper on ‘Philology as one of the Sciences,’ *Macmillan's Magazine*, No. III.

speech, but it was the eldest sister, and the one which reflected most closely the maternal features. When once a few scholars had profoundly studied it, and had published their results to the world,—when such a book as Bopp's 'Comparative Grammar' had placed side by side the facts of nine such languages as Sanskrit, Zend, Armenian, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Slavonian, Gothic, and German, and when Prichard, Zeuss, Diefenbach, and others, had published their Celtic labours,—it could no longer remain doubtful to any reasonable man that the stately Brahmin, and the gay Frenchman, and the restless Albanian, and the Irish peasant, and the Russian serf, and the Lithuanian farmer, and the English gentleman, and the Dutch boor, nay, even the poor outcast wandering gipsy, all speak languages which were once a single and undivided form of human speech, and are all sprung from ancestors who radiated from one geographical centre which was their common home.

The proofs of this original identity of so many languages, each of which has now to be separately learnt as a foreign tongue, rest (1) in the similarity of grammatical structure, and (2) in the fundamental identity of roots. One or two illustrations will perhaps serve to set these points of resemblance in a clearer light.

1. There is in all these languages a marked similarity of grammatical structure. Every one of them is strictly inflectional, and their inflections, whether they still continue to be numerous, or whether (as is the case with English) they have dwindled down to a very few, are all formed on the same method, and may all be demonstrably traced to the same original forms. I say *strictly* inflectional, for, although inflections exist in the Semitic languages (those of which Hebrew is a type), the real characteristic of those languages is what the Germans call *Umlaut*, i.e. a change of meaning chiefly due to the internal varying of a vowel, as in our *sing, sang, sung*. Now, by an inflectional language we mean one which expresses its moods, tenses, cases, and

all other modifications of meaning in verbs and nouns by means of certain suffixes which apparently are arbitrary, which were, indeed, until quite lately, believed to be purely conventional, and therefore wholly incapable of analysis or explanation, but which are now proved to be the mutilated fragments of words, and, for the most part, of pronouns, adverbs, or simple and auxiliary verbs. The fact that such elements, which in ruder languages *retain* their original meaning, should in all this class of languages be reduced to merely formative and symbolic elements, is a proof of the high literary cultivation which these languages have undergone, and of the complete mastery and triumph of the reason and the intellect over the rude cries and imitations which were the sole materials originally at its disposal. Linguistic forms of this kind are to the human intelligence of exactly the same value as algebraic symbols are to the mathematician. They incredibly facilitate the operations of thought. In Yameo, an aboriginal American language, the word *three* is etarrararincouroac, and this, as a French author wittily observes, is quite sufficient reason to account for their numerical system stopping at that point. The immeasurably long polysyllables of savage languages, a ponderosity due to their attempt to agglomerate a number of words without inflection or synthesis, would render literature in such languages impossible; and it is almost impossible to imagine such a thing as style, or even sustained consecutive thought, in languages which, like the Ojebway or Eskimo, have jewels fourteen syllables long, to express the simplest conceptions. Now it is the glory of the inflectional languages to have trampled completely on this tyranny of expression; to have reduced all the essential elements of language to conventional symbols, and yet to use them with algebraic accuracy in the expression of thought, and to simplify them by 'progressive integration' to the smallest and most convenient compass. What Greek, for instance, would have supposed that in such a word as *τύψουσι*, 'they will strike,' there lay hid five separate elements, viz., *τυπ*,

the root,  $\sigma$ , the fragment of the verb  $\alpha s$ , 'to be,' a fragment of the verb  $\gamma a$ , 'to go,' obliterated by contraction, and the fragment of two demonstrative pronouns which have suffered a similar fate: so that the entire meaning of the word would be 'there is going to be a blow as regards him, him'?<sup>1</sup> What Latin could have supposed that the unerring analysis of language would prove that such a word as *ecidero*, 'I shall have fallen,' is reducible to the elements 'fall-fall-going-to-be-(as regards)-me'? Or, to make the subject more clear, let me borrow a good English illustration from Professor Whitney's 'Lectures on Language.'<sup>2</sup> Take such a word as 'inapplicabilities;' it is rather a long word, an unusual word, and a word of a very abstract meaning: yet the simplest person would know at once what it meant, without, perhaps, having the faintest conception that the whole word was but a cluster of modifying syllables around the original root '*plic*,' a fold, and that it consists of the two prepositions *in* and *ad*, the root *plic*, the junction vowel *a*, the adjective termination *bili* implying power, the *ty*, which is the mark of an abstract substantive, and the *s*, which is a sign of the plural; and that, further than this, every one of these elements of the word, though they have now wholly ceased to have any separate meaning or existence, was once a *separate* word with a distinct meaning of its own. Now, the Abbé Domenech tells us that such is the absolute deficiency of the most simple abstractions in some of the American languages, that an Indian cannot say 'I smoke,' without using such a number of concrete pictures, that his immensely long word to represent that monosyllabic action means, 'I breathe the vapour of a fire of herb which burns in a stone bowl wedged into a pierced stone.'<sup>3</sup> Imagine such a process of word-formation as this applied to a cultivated or literary language: imagine

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller explanation of this synthesis see the author's *Brief Greek Syntax*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Page 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Voy. dans les grands déserts du Nouveau-Monde*, p. 392.

that instead of the word inapplicabilities, we were obliged to use a sort of printer's-hyphen word like 'the plural-condition-of-not-being-able-to-fold-one-thing-into-another ;' imagine this, I say, and then see the immense victory which has been achieved by the Aryan race, in adopting inflectional synthesis as the basis of their grammatical structure. Or, again, take such a word as 'recommence ;' which of us in ordinarily using that very common word is ever likely to be troubled by remembering that it is composed of the six elements, re-cum-in-it-i-a-re, viz., 'to be going into again with' ? or which of us ever dreamt till recently that the latter *re* in that form, the *re* in which all Latin inflections end, is a demonstrable relic of *esse* (Sanskrit *as*), the infinitival form of the verb 'to be' ? And yet, be it observed, that although thousands of such synthetic forms could be selected from English, English has become far less purely *inflectional* than any other language of the whole Indo-European, or Aryan family. It has discarded its inflections unsparingly; indeed, so unsparingly that barely a dozen of them in the whole language are left in common use, and the others it has so completely pared down that they are unrecognisable to any eye but that of the philologist. Who, for instance, would imagine that the *d* in the word *had*<sup>1</sup> is the relic of an auxiliary verb which once possessed, in a single tense of the middle voice, no less than eight inflections ? Yet even a *few* terminations of this kind furnish an undoubted proof that the fundamental idea and structure of English, as of all the Indo-European languages, is (in spite of its immense development of the analytical process) synthetic and inflectional. It may have happened to some of my audience

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<sup>1</sup> Compare	I had	We had	
	You had	Ye had	
	He had	They had	
	<i>Sing.</i>	<i>Dual.</i>	<i>Plur.</i>
with the Gothic	hab-aida	hab-aidêdu	hab-aidêdum
	hab-aidês	hab-aidêduts	hab-aidêduth
	hab-aidd		hab-aidêdun

to have had the rare pleasure of hearing Professor Huxley lecture, and show how the idea of the structure of the entire animal kingdom may be represented by a vertebra with two lateral processes ; and how, in a lobster, for instance, every single function of every single articulation, from the jaw to the flipper, is provided for by a modification of this single structure. The demonstration is wonderful, but it is not, I think, more wonderful than the demonstration of the manner in which man has moulded the faculty of language into a thousand different forms, which yet retain their own marked individuality, and has, without any violence or discontinuity of development, made the simplest pronouns express the most complex multiplicity of conceptions and relations.

2. But this similarity of grammatical structure in all Aryan languages is accompanied by an ultimate identity in the vast majority of roots.

It is now a matter of simple notoriety that not merely in sounds and letters, but in fundamental radical structure—and not only in words which might conceivably have been borrowed from obvious natural sounds, but in words deduced through a long series of imaginative metaphors or fanciful analogies<sup>1</sup>—the vocabulary of any single Aryan language,

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<sup>1</sup> These cautions are exceedingly necessary. The hurry of etymologists has led them to see signs of relationship between languages radically distinct simply by virtue of a few onomatopoeic, or even purely illusory, homonyms: yet it does not need much acumen to see that *αὐγή* has no connection with the German *Auge*, or *laus* with the German *Laus*! Lars, says Professor Whitney, has as much to do with *laird* as it has with deputy-sheriff. People have compared the Polynesian *mati*, an eye, with the modern Greek, but the word in modern Greek is simply a contraction of *ὀμμάτιον*; and the Hebrew *kophar* with the English *cover*, although *cover* is a corruption of *conoperire*. Klaproth even compared the Japanese *ta tchin* with the English *teaching*! If these accidental phonetic coincidences or apparent coincidences of written words were worth noticing, one might connect the Chinese *uhr* with the German *Ohr*, or the Jenisei *eg* with the English *egg*, or the Galla *aba* with the Welsh *afon*, or the Karib *alaiba* with the Gothic *hlaifs* (loaf). Pott has some excellent remarks on this subject in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morg. Ges.* ix. 405 fg. 1855. See, too, Max

in spite of the effacing influences of time, and the disturbing elements of foreign admixture, stands in a very close relation to the vocabularies of all the rest. The numerals, the pronouns, the most ordinary and essential verbs, the words for all the commonest relationships, for the parts of the body, for nearly all the domestic animals, for the most necessary cereals, and the most familiar metals, are substantially the same in all the languages of this great family. That such is the fact may be seen by any one who will take the trouble to examine a few comparative lists; but it may be more interesting to observe that even when the words in several branches are *different*, the *roots* of them all are to be found in the family possession; and that very often when the words are as absolutely unlike each other as they can possibly be, they can yet be deduced, through easy stages of differentiation, from a common original stock. As an instance of the first fact, take the word 'horse.' In Persian it is *fâl*, in French *cheval*, in German *Pferd*, in Anglo-Saxon *wicg*, in Polish *koń*; and these words have no connection with each other: yet there is not, I believe, one of them which is not traceable to a Sanskrit root. The root 'horse' (if it be not, as I myself believe, ultimately an onomatopœia) may allude to the spirit of the animal (*karasa*, 'what passion'<sup>1</sup>); *cheval*, the Latin *caballus*, is from an old root, *capala*, swift. *Wicg* is probably from *vâga*, rapidity; *koń*,

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Müller in Bunsen, *Philos. of Hist.* i. 356: 'I believe that there is hardly a word in any language to which, making the usual allowance for change of form and meaning, some other word might not be found almost identical.' One of the first scholars to state this principle clearly was Job Ludolf, in the Preface to his *Æthiopic Grammar and Lexicon*, 1702.

<sup>1</sup> M. Pictet's remark (*Orig. indo-eur.* i. 349) that the word 'cherry' has apparently the same origin ('où cependant le mot *rasa* a le sens de *suc*'), will not add to the probability of this derivation. And yet it is certain that language does seize on the most marvellous analogies. 'What the German philosopher described as the relation of a cow to a comet,' says Mr. E. B. Tylor, 'is sufficient, and more than sufficient, to the language-maker—*both have tails*.' How remote, for instance, is

from *ῥῶν*, 'to be red' (or bay-coloured), and so on: the simple explanation being that in the Aryan mother-speech the animal had *different* names, derived from different attributes, and in the struggle for existence which takes place among words no less than among living organisms, the effects of accident caused one form or other to prevail.<sup>1</sup>

The radical changes which are effected in the sound of words by apparently trivial influences is one of the earliest lessons which we learn in etymology. The youngest tiro is hardly surprised to learn that *lieu* and *coucher* both spring from one root (*locus, collocare*), and that *habeo* lurks in the word *debt* (*de habeo = debeo*). A curious etymological paper might be written on the influence of nasals and aspirates alone, in modifying the forms of words. As instances of words which are demonstrably identical, though apparently unlike, let me take the three words, *milk*, *five*, *eye*. Who would suppose that there was any connection between the Greek *γάλα* and the English *milk*? Yet the Latin *lac*, as compared with the other Greek from *γάλας*, gives us naturally and at once an original form, *mlag*, connected with *mulgeo* and *ἀμέλω*, and all the variations at once become obvious and clear; <sup>2</sup> while, although none of these deriva-

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the apparent connection between flies and musquets, or varnish and the golden hair of an Egyptian queen? Who would have expected that the word *money* derives its origin from a temple of the goddess Juno, or that *treacle* has anything to do with wild beasts? or that the names *naphtha* and *emery* are traceable to legends about Jeremiah and King Solomon? Yet so it is.

<sup>1</sup> It is often curious to watch the effect of this struggle for existence; for instance, gold in Greek is *χρυσός*; in Latin it is *aurum*; yet such a word as *θησαυρός*, 'a treasure,' shows that *χρυσός* is a usurper, and has expelled its rival form which is triumphant in the sister tongue. Similarly, such a compound as *βούκολος* shows that there was once in Greek, no less than in Latin, a verb *colo*, I tend; but in Greek it has been ousted by *ρέμω*.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly all the varieties come from an onomatopœia of the dashing of milk into the pails—*mlaksh* (see Bensfey, *Griech. Wurzel*. i. 485), Bopp sees in the initial syllable of *γάλα* the root *gd*=cow, and compares the Irish *blacht*=*bó-leacht*. Curtius's objection, that even in the



tives come from the Sanskrit *dughda*, yet the root *duh*, 'to milk,' from which that is derived, is seen at once in the Latin *duco*, the English *dug*, and even in the word *daughter*, which, like θυγάτηρ, *Tochter*, &c., all spring from the word *duhitar*, once applied to the maidens of the Aryan family, because it was their function to milk the cows. And while we are alluding to the word *duhitar* (daughter), who would have believed *à priori*, what yet is a certain fact, that it is the lineal ancestor, by a proved genealogy, of the Bohemian *dci*?<sup>1</sup> Again, what words could seem to be wider apart than the Greek πέντε, the Latin *quinque*, the French *cinq*, and the South Wallachian *tzina*, the old Irish *coic*, the Welsh *pump*, and the English *five*?<sup>2</sup> Yet these words are each

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Græco-Italic time the word *gô* had assumed the forms βούς, *bos*, seems fatal against this conjecture. (*Griech. Etym.* i. 123.) Bopp also connects the roots *duh* and *lac*. Donaldson connects γάλα with γελᾶν, ἄγλαος, &c. (*New Crat.* § 459.)

<sup>1</sup> The following list of names for goose, duck, swan, &c., in different Aryan languages, all meaning web-footed, and derived from *gâla*, 'a net,' and *pâd*, 'a foot,' illustrates in a very curious and striking manner the immense changes which the same root may undergo in the process of time. Until we have seen the whole list we should find it hard to believe that *cûr-pah*, *le-bedi*, and *yl-fet* were the same word.

<i>Sanskrit</i>	. gâla-pâd, web-foot ; goose.	<i>Anglo-Saxon</i>	. yl-fet.
<i>Persian</i>	{ gûrah-pah } duck.	<i>Scandinavian</i>	. âl-ft.
	{ cûr-pah }	<i>Old German</i>	. al-biz.
<i>Armenian</i>	. gara-b, swan.	<i>Old Russian</i>	. le-bedi.
<i>Lithuanian</i>	. gul-ba, swan.	<i>Illyrian</i>	. la-but.
<i>Irish</i>	. gall-a, swan.		
See Pictet, i. 390.			

Again, who would suppose that such a sound as *an* could, by a perfectly traceable process, become *vu* in two such allied languages as Slavonian and German (e.g. *anderer*, *vutoro*)? Yet such is the case. In Slavonian *an* becomes first a nasal sound, and is then shortened to *u*, and as *u* cannot, in that language, *begin* a word, *v* is prefixed to it, and we get *vu*. (*Schleicher, Die Deutsche Sprache*, 30.)

<sup>2</sup> The changes of almost any other numeral are equally remarkable. Compare, for instance, the Greek τέσσαρες, the Latin *quatuor*, the Welsh *pedwar*, the Irish *keathair*, the Sanskrit *éatur*, the English *four*; or the Greek ὀκτώ, with the Sanskrit *ashtair*, the Welsh *wyth*, and the English *eight*.

and all of them directly connected with the same root as the Sanskrit *pañān*, which is derived from the word *pāni*, the hand, and they are connected with it not by accident, still less by caprice, but by laws easily demonstrable and perfectly understood. And similarly, by a process of direct affiliation, we can prove the identity of the Greek *τίς*, the Latin *quis*, the Gothic *hvas*, the German *wer*, and the English *who* with the Sanskrit *kas*; and can deduce the English word *eye*, the French *œil*, the Gothic *augo*, the Lithuanian *anku*, the Latin *oculus*, the Greek *ὄμμα*, the *ov* in window, and the *y* in daisy, from the Sanskrit *akshi*,<sup>1</sup> though many of them have not a letter in common. To multiply instances would be needless. Even a schoolboy knows that *dens* and *tooth*, *δίκη* and *judge*, *coucher* and *locus*, *larme* and *tear*, *dies* and *jour*, *vingt* and *ἑξοσι*, *galaxy* and *lettuce*, *cousin* and *sister*, *savage* and *ῥλη*, *wig* and *perruque*, absolutely unlike each other as they look, spring immediately and directly from common roots.<sup>2</sup>

Since, then, the same grammatical principles, the same laws of structure, dominate throughout the Aryan languages, and since, even when their apparent differences are most obvious, it may yet be proved that there is a complete identity in their main roots, there can be no shadow of a doubt as to the meaning of this table of the Aryan languages. It represents no ingenious speculation, no conjectural affinities, but is intended to represent in a single *coup d'œil* the striking truth that the many living, no less than the dead languages whose names are contained in it, were once but *one* language, and that the many peoples—including all the

<sup>1</sup> Boltz, *Die Sprache und ihr Leben*, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Apropos, however, of *wig* and *perruque* (*pilus*, *piluculus*, *perruque*, *periwig*—*wig*), where, as in 'bus' for *omnibus*, the tail of the word has (as in some decapitated annelid) assumed a separate existence, it may be worth while to remark that the influence of *diminutives* sometimes greatly obscures the origin of a word. Thus, the modern Greek *φείδι* seems to have no connection with *φῆς* till we think of *φῆδιον*, or *μάτ:* with *ψ* till we think of *δπ-μα*, *δπ-μάτιον*.

most powerful and the most celebrated which the world has ever seen—whose existence it represents, sprang within an almost historical period from one common stock. The epoch of their migrations from their common home cannot be determined with any certainty, but possibly it may not have been earlier than 2,000 B.C. The most ancient name by which they called themselves, or rather the most ancient name of this race with which we are acquainted, was the name *Aryas*, a name derived from the root *ar*,<sup>1</sup> to plough, and which therefore implied originally an agricultural as distinguished from a rude and nomadic race, and thus naturally came to mean ‘noble.’ It is true that this name belonged distinctively to the two great eastern branches of this family, the Iranian<sup>2</sup> and Indian; but as they lingered the longest in the region of the primitive home, they are most likely to have retained the original name; and not only are *traces* of the same root to be found abundantly in the other families of the race, but it is even believed that the beloved and familiar name of Erin<sup>3</sup> is a far-off western echo of this primeval designation. As the name Indo-Germanic, which was originally proposed, is obviously too narrow and exclusive, and as Indo-European, which conveniently represents them by geographical area, is also too narrow for the universal and growing colonies which this race has founded even in the remotest islands of the Pacific, it is clear that *Aryan* remains at present the best name by which to call them. Their *original home* may be assigned by a multitude of concurrent probabilities.<sup>4</sup> That

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, in its more primitive and general sense, implying upward or forward motion. It is a word from which have sprung countless derivatives. See an admirable account of this root in Professor Max Müller's *Lectures* (First Series, 2nd ed. 283 seq.).

<sup>2</sup> The old name of the Medes was \**Aprioi*, *Herod.* vii. 62.

<sup>3</sup> See an interesting note in Professor Max Müller's *Survey of Languages*, 28.

<sup>4</sup> Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumsk.* i. 256. Pictet, *Orig. indo-eur.* 35-42. Weber, *Indische Skizzen*. So far as I am aware, Benfey alone places the original home of the Aryans in Europe. He is led to do so, in

it was somewhere in the vast plateau of Iran, in the immense quadrilateral which extends from the Indus to the Euphrates, and from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, may be assumed as almost certain; and we may fairly conclude, by the aid of tradition and other circumstances, that it was immediately north of the great chain of the Hindoo-Koosh, west of the Bolor range, or the ancient Imaus,<sup>1</sup> in the central region of Bactriana, a district so fair, and fertile, and flourishing, that it was called by Orientals 'the mother of cities.' This region was eminently suited to become the cradle of that princely race of shepherds from whose loins sprang the nations of Europe, and which, at a period long after China and Egypt had reached the apogee of their crude civilisation, was still creating in the bosom of its peaceful families the eternal words which, as the law of many a noble, chivalrous, and Christian country, were destined to become 'honour,' 'virtue,' and 'duty.'<sup>2</sup>

In this region, amid scenery 'grandiose yet severe'—where Nature *yields* her treasures, but does not *lavish* them, and is far more admirably adapted than the cruel North or the enervating tropics to develop and reward the persevering industry of man—lived a race, unguessed at by history, unknown even to tradition, but revealed by philology—a race beautiful in person, pure in morals, earnest in thought, simple in habits, which, in a peaceful life, and under a patriarchal government, wrought out, as a means of its own precocious development, a language admirable for the wealth, harmony, and perfection of its forms, full of poetic

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part, because of the absence of the root 'lion' in Sanskrit and Persian (*Gesch. der Sprachw.* 600); but his reasons are exceedingly inadequate. Out of many names for lion there is nothing strange in the disappearance of one. Any animal which is not very common, or generally distributed, is sure to be known by a number of different local names.

<sup>1</sup> The name Imaus (Skr. *himavat*, 'snowy') was originally applied to the Hindoo-Koosh, but afterwards to that chain running north and south—the meridian axis of Central Asia—sometimes called the Bolor range.

<sup>2</sup> Renan, *Orig. du Lang.* 235.

images and pregnant metaphors, and carrying in itself the germ of a magnificent expansion ; and, with this language to aid it, the same happy race learnt to acquire ideas which were destined to bear fruit a hundred-fold hereafter in the conquest, colonisation, free institutions, and unceasing Christian progress of the civilised world.

The causes which led to their emigration from their peaceful home—what made the great tide of Aryan emigration roll majestically in a western direction—the order in which they wandered forth to win new thoughts and conquer fresh countries—why it was that the Zinjala, from the cordilleras of Guatemala to the plains of Poland, became for ever a homeless wanderer over the surface of the earth—what drove the Norwegian and the Icelandic ever farther and farther towards the inclement and pine-clad North—why the Kelt first ensconced himself behind the storm-swept cliffs of Britain—what happy destiny guided one great family to the plains of Persia and Hindostan, and another to the shores of the blue Mediterranean and the poetic hills of Italy and Greece—we cannot tell. Whether it was the result of religious divisions, or physical convulsions, or civil feuds—whether it was due to the gradual dissolution or the sudden dismemberment of tribal relations—whether it was simply caused by the natural growth of population, or by the restless spirit of enterprise—whether the tribes passed away under different leaders in a succession of waves, each wave driving its predecessor farther towards the West and South—all this is buried in eternal oblivion ; but the *main* fact is certain, that ‘westward the course of empires took its way,’ and the conclusions on which we are about to dwell may be regarded as established in their broad outlines if not in their more minute details.

If you will look at the following ellipse, with its lines radiating from one of the foci, which here represents the common cradle of the race, it will give you a conception—general indeed, and by no means indisputable, but yet founded on data which may be regarded as at least approximately

correct—both of the geographical position of the divergent families and of their direction and relative distances from the original stock. Farthest, you will observe, from the original home are the Kelts; nearest to it are the Hindoos and Persians; next to them come the Greeks and Slavonians; while the Germans and Latins occupy an intermediate position. Looking both to geography and history, we may, without any extravagance, infer that the *first* to move <sup>1</sup> westward were the Kelts, and the *last* the Slavonians, who, finding the rest of Europe already occupied, were forced to make their new home in its northern and eastern regions. At any rate, the parents of these nations, under whatever circumstances, *did* wander away from the regions in which they first appeared; their communications with their old home became infrequent; new methods of life arose; new



national characteristics were developed; new dialects multiplied; they forgot their Asian origin and their mutual relationships, and soon learnt to regard themselves as autochthonous on the soil which they possessed. The old home was gradually abandoned, and the children went into far countries to take an independent part in the hastening *dénouement* of the great drama of humanity, and to enrich by special characteristics the noble heritage of their common endowments.

Let us now consider a little more closely this great table before us.

At the top of it you will see the words, Primitive Language of the Aryan Race, and you will observe the implica-

<sup>1</sup> Pictet, *Les Origines indo-européennes, ou les Aryas primitifs*, i. 50, from which this illustration is taken.

tion that this original language is not for a moment asserted to have been the primitive language of *mankind*.

All that we assert is that it was the primitive language of *a race of mankind* whose different offshoots, at various periods of history down from its earliest dawn, established the Achæmenid dynasty, built Athens and Lacedæmon, founded Rome, worked the tin mines of Cornwall, and the silver mines of Spain, first made London a city of ships, occupied Paris while Paris was still but the mud city of the borderers, produced the Vedas and the Homeric poems, and the Sháh-námeh, and the Eddas, and the Nibelungen-Lied,—invented the printing-press, discovered America, circumnavigated the globe, developed the principles of every science, and, in a word, founded that immense and marvellous system of modern civilisation which is the chief triumph of the intellect of man.

Whether ultimately all languages are not dialects of one—whether millenniums back, in the impenetrable night of ages, there ever was a period when *all* the representatives of the entire human family (if such representatives there were) expressed themselves in the same forms of speech—is a question which will certainly never be settled, and which as certainly there is no shadow of linguistic evidence to prove. Nor is there anything but *à priori* reasoning of a very dubious character to show that even this original speech of the *particular* branch of the human race to which we belong ever passed through the stages here dubiously indicated of monosyllabism and agglutination—stages which I hope to make clearer in another Lecture—before it attained the inflectional character.<sup>1</sup> This original speech has of course been dead for ages, and even Sanskrit, its oldest and purest

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<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that Dante, rising superior to the prejudices of his age, attached no faith to the popular misconception that Hebrew was the primitive language. 'La lingua ch' io parlai fu tutta spenta' are the words which he puts into the mouth of Adam. (*Paradiso*, canto xxvi.)

representative, is dead, and Keltic, its next oldest representative, is dying ; but from comparison of all its representatives—though it perished long before history began, though no vestige of it on rock, or pyramid, or gem, or coin, or poem preserved by immemorial tradition, now remains—its forms can be conjecturally restored. To restore them in this manner was the object of the celebrated Compendium of Professor August Schleicher. But even this language is only reproducible in its perfect and full-grown condition. How it grew we know not. ‘No man saw the Tree planted—no mortal hand watered the bursting of the grove : no register was kept of the gradual widening of its girth, or the growing circumference of its shade, till the unexpected bole stands forth in all its magnitude, carrying aloft in its foliage the poetry, the history, and the philosophy of heroic peoples.’ But although the labours of recent scholars have recovered for us, with tolerable certainty, many words of this ancient tongue, yet all that we know of it *historically* is that, in very early times, a great split in it must have taken place in consequence of the westward divergence of two great divisions of the hitherto united race which spoke it. To the division which occupied the northern, central, and eastern parts of Europe, we may give the name of Letto-Slavo-Teutonic, derived from the nationalities into which it was afterwards differentiated. To the division which occupied the southern and western peninsulas of Europe we may give the name of Græco-Italic. Earlier, perhaps, than either of these great divisions, the ancestors of the once widespread and mighty race of the Kelts had wandered into Europe. The area over which Keltic names are found diffused shows the original extent of their dominion ; but they were gradually dispossessed of its central regions by the advancing Teutons, before whom they have constantly retired to the westward, and before whom their remote Irish descendants are still migrating beyond the Atlantic. For a long period after the first beginning of this westward Exodus, the Aryans proper, i.e. the ancestors of the Persians and Hindoos, were still





entirely linguistic in their character. They rest generally on the fact that certain roots—such, for instance, as those which express the numerals, the pronouns, the domestic animals, the near degrees of relationship, and other early and necessary conceptions—are (as we have already observed) common to every branch of this great family; whereas other roots are common only to the western or the eastern members of it, showing most distinctly that there was a certain heritage of roots and linguistic ideas *common to the entire undivided race*, while others could only have been developed *separately*, as occasion for them arose, long after the family had been split asunder.

If, for instance, we examine the names of plants and trees in these Aryan languages, we find the generic name for tree, branch, stem, &c., common to them all; but when we come to the *specific* nomenclature, we find words running through all the European family, which are totally distinct from those of Hindostan. In Hindostan the Aryans encountered a tropical vegetation, entirely unlike the temperate one to which they had been accustomed on the Iranian plateau. There was but one tree which they recognised; it was the tree which for so many centuries of English education was regarded as the necessary tree of knowledge—the tree which, if I may be pardoned the allusion, has so often ‘blushed with patrician blood’—I mean the awful and venerable birch. *Bhurrja* is the Sanskrit name for ‘birch;’ and as it was the only tree which the Aryans, coming as conquerors from the North, were able to recognise, it is also the only tree whose name is common to Sanskrit and the languages of Europe.<sup>1</sup> A similar argument may be derived from the root *lin* in ‘linen.’ We indeed have adopted from Anglo-Saxon the word *flax*, which is derived from the same root as the Greek *πλέκω*, I weave; but in nearly all the European languages we find for flax such words as the Greek

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<sup>1</sup> Klaproth's *Nouv. Journ. asiat.* v. 112. The root is connected with the English *bark*, Scandinavian *börk*, Gothic *brikan*, Greek *ρήγ-νυμι*, Latin *frango*, &c. See Pictet, *Orig. ind.-eur.* p. 218.

λίνον, the Latin *linum*, Gothic *lein*, the Irish *lin*, the Welsh *llin*, and the Russian *lenu*; yet in the languages of India, early as the cultivation of flax was known, we find for its name such wholly different roots as *atasi* and *ûma*; showing clearly that the *Western* Aryans must have known and used this plant while they were a *yet undivided* body, yet *after* the great split which separated them from the Aryans of the east. And this indeed is but *one* out of many concurrent indications which all tend to prove the remarkable and interesting conclusion that the Eastern Aryans continued to be mainly a pastoral race, long after agriculture had been greatly developed among their brethren of the west.<sup>1</sup> We should arrive at exactly the same conclusion from an examination of the Indian and European names for domestic animals, which are mostly coincident, and for wild animals, many of which are divergent; and from the names for the badger, the beaver, the hedgehog, and various birds. The argument is very strikingly confirmed from another very different source. If we examine the words for oyster, we find that throughout Europe they all involve the same root, viz. Greek ὄστρεον, Latin *ostrea*, Scandinavian *ôstra*, French *huitre*, Irish *oisridh*, Welsh *oestren*, Russian *ustersii*, Armenian *osdri*,—and so on,—all derived probably from the same root as the Latin *os*, and descriptive of the bony shell of the mollusc, and all totally different from the Sanskrit *pushtika*. The only inference from this fact is that the Western Aryans became familiar with the Caspian Sea, and

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<sup>1</sup> The vocabulary of agriculture is not common to the whole Aryan family, or even to all its western branches. The roots which are found in Sanskrit had, in that language, a general and not a special signification; e.g. *agras* means, not a cultivated field, but a *plain*; *gîrna*, not corn, but anything pounded; *arîtram*, not plough, but that which furrows the sea, i.e. an oar and a keel; *venas*, not wine, but any agreeable drink. See Mommsen, *Röm. Gesch.* I. ch. ii. The only cereal the name of which is evidently common to all the Aryans is *yava*, *šed*, barley and spelt, to which they seem to have attached great importance, and which is said to have been found wild on the banks of the Euphrates. See Lassen, *Ind. Alterth.* i. 247.

therefore with oysters, long before their eastern brethren, who, not meeting with them till they reached the shores of the Indian Ocean, hit upon another name for them, derived from an entirely different root.<sup>1</sup> And the value of these methods of reasoning consists in the fact that they are constantly getting fresh light thrown upon them from different and wholly unexpected quarters. Take, for instance, the conjecture about the Caspian Sea; if it be correct we should naturally look for a confirmation of it in the entire class of words descriptive of navigation. Now this is, to a very remarkable extent, the case: from comparing the words which are common and the words which are divergent, we see that the undivided Aryans were indeed acquainted with *boats* and *oars* for the navigation of their rivers—the Oxus and its affluents—and therefore that *these things* are named by common roots through the entire family, from extreme north-west to extreme south-east; but considering that they had not extended at that time so far as the shores of the Caspian, and that even when one branch of them did reach that sea, the Caspian is in no sense a highroad of nations, and therefore offers no temptations for the development of navigation, all the words which describe the *higher parts of navigation*,—the words for sail, and mast, and rudder, &c.—not only differ from each other in many European languages (as they did even in Greek and Latin<sup>2</sup>), but also in Sanskrit and Persian furnish no sort of analogy to their European synonyms.<sup>3</sup>

You will, I think, see how clearly by arguments like these the fact of a first general division in this race is proved, and

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<sup>1</sup> See Pictet, i. 320, 440-455 passim, 515, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Thus *navis* and *ναῦς*, *ἑρεμὸς* and *remus*, are clearly the same words; but *ιστρίον* has no connection with *velum*, *στρίρα* with *carina*, *πηδάλιον* or *οἰαξ* with *gubernaculum*, *κεράλα* with *antenna*, *ιστός* with *malum*, *κάλαι* with *rudentes*, &c. The immigrations into Italy were all by land, and hence Italy was unknown even to Homer.

<sup>3</sup> Pictet, ii. 179-188. Similar arguments may be derived from the varying laws of reduplication, from interchange of letters, &c. See Ferrar, *Comp. Gram.* pp. 21, 96, &c.

it is on similar evidence, partly linguistic, partly ethnographical, partly geographical, partly historic, that the whole of the accompanying table depends. You will observe that eight distinct families—the Indian, the Iranian, the Hellenic, the Italic, the Keltic, the Slavonic, the Lithuanian, and the Teutonic<sup>1</sup>—have all sprung from the parent stem, and I purpose to conclude the present Lecture by a brief glance at these eight families. My task will be rendered far shorter, and your own understanding of the subject will be far more distinct and real, if you will be so kind as to take my remarks in connection with the accompanying map and tables, which have been drawn up for their illustration.

I. Earliest, in all probability, to break off from the yet undivided race was the Kelto-Græco-Italic family, which afterwards settled into the three important branches, Greeks, Latins, and Kelts. In course of time this family occupied almost all the rivers, coasts, and islands of southern and western Europe, and for us it is a most interesting and memorable division of the race, since it not only furnished the basis of our nationality, but also the chief elements of our political, social, and intellectual existence.

i. The Keltic family—whose narrowed and no longer independent dominions are coloured orange on the map—is a branch of the Aryan race, in which we ought to fee the deepest and liveliest interest, because its direct descendants are united to us by the closest ties, and because no small portion of its blood is flowing in our veins. It was, we have some ground to believe, the first to wander, as it was the farthest in its wandering from the old home, and in consequence of this it was among the last to be recognised as a member of the family. Our own islands, where in very early days we find this Aryan settlement

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<sup>1</sup> Several of these families called themselves by names quite different from those by which they were known to the world. Cf. Rasena and Etrusci; Græci and Ἑλλήνες; Wallachian and Români; Gypsy and Zingali; Alemanos, Germani, Tedeschi, and Deutschen.

fishing in their osier coracles, and working the superficial veins of tin in Cornwall, furnished the Kelts with their securest refuge and their latest home. From very early days they were truly 'a nation scattered and peeled. Subjugated by Roman and Teuton, or fairly driven away by the victorious arms of these invaders from the immense territories which once they occupied, the purest relics of their language, and the lonely cromlechs and Druidic circles which still remain as the melancholy memorials of their religion, are chiefly to be found in Ireland, Wales, the Highlands, and the little Island of Man. But it is doubtful whether these few material and linguistic records will long continue to be preserved. The Cornish language perished with Dolly Pentreath in 1770. Manx will probably follow it in another generation. Bas-Breton and Gaelic are shrinking within very contracted limits; and who shall say how long Welsh and Irish will withstand the encroaching force of railroads and telegraphs? But even if the languages of the Kelt should perish, the traces of their past power will long remain. 'Mountains and rivers,' says Sir Francis Palgrave, 'still murmur the voice of nations long denationalised or extirpated.' Though the glossaries of Gael and Cymry should utterly pass away, the names they gave to the grandest features of many a landscape will still live upon the map.<sup>1</sup>

ii. Of the Hellenic family I need say but little. It would be impossible, as you know, to exaggerate the part they have played in the world's history. There was no depth of

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<sup>1</sup> 'In the geographical nomenclature of *Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain, and England*, we find a Celtic stratum underlying the superficial deposit of Teutonic and Romanic names.'—Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 203. See too Diefenbach's *Celtica*, and Bunsen's *Phil. of Univ. Hist.* i. 148. The purest remaining form of Keltic is to be found in old Irish glosses, versions, &c., of the eighth or ninth centuries, the period when Ireland was a 'mother of saints.' The oldest Keltic roots have been preserved for us in Greek and Latin writers, not only in the forms of such proper names as Brennus, Caradoc, Caswallan,

philosophy which they did not sound, no height of poetry to which they did not soar. The whole region of human thought yet thrills with the electric shock of their genius; and of their art we may say, adopting the address of the poet to its mythic representative,

Weep for Dædalus, all that is fairest,  
All that is tuneful in air or wave,  
Shapes whose beauty is richest and rarest  
Deck with your sighs and songs his grave.

Never did the language of man attain a greater perfection of synthetic grace, forceful accuracy, and inflectional precision than among this marvellous people. 'Greek,' says Henry Nelson Coleridge, 'the shrine of the genius of the old world; as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves: of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength; with the complication and distinctness of nature herself, to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English; at once the variety and picturesqueness of Homer, the gloom and intensity of Æschylus; not compressed to the closet by Thucydides, not fathomed to the bottom by Plato, not sounding with all its thunders, nor lit up with all its ardours under the Promethean touch of Demosthenes himself.'

But besides its intrinsic beauty, and the unequalled wealth of its literature, there are many reasons which make the study of Greek invaluable to the philologist. (i.) In the first place, in spite of the numerous modifications which it

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Bonduca, &c., but also in such words as *bascanda*, 'basket,' which owe their preservation to their bizarre sound and appearance. See Garnett's *Essays*, p. 161.

A Keltic colony in Galatia preserved its distinctive language for some centuries after Christ.

A glance at the table will show that the two main divisions of the Keltic language are Gaelic (or Erse)—including Irish, Highland Scotch, and Manx; and Cymric,—including Welsh, the dead Cornish, and the dying Armorican or Bas-Breton.

must have undergone previous to the discovery of writing, it has preserved with extraordinary fidelity, and in some cases with a nicety superior to that of Sanskrit itself, the most delicate refinements of verbal inflection; and while maintaining a perfect mastery over the power of compounding words, it has kept this synthesis from degenerating, as it does in Sanskrit, into immeasurable polysyllables. (ii.) In the second place, not only do its records extend, almost unaltered, over a period of more than a thousand years, from Homer down to Tzetzes and Eustathius, nay, even down to Theophanes and Malalas,—so that during this long period the minutest modifying influences have left upon the language their indelible impressions, and we are able to examine their operation at leisure—but, further than this, the Greek language, with changes comparatively insignificant, has continued to be a spoken language to this day, so that in comparing a song of Riga with an Homeric rhapsody, we can estimate the effects of time and circumstance on human speech over a space of some three millenniums. In no other language which the world has ever heard would it be possible to find the works of writers separated from each other by such enormous epochs, and yet equally intelligible to any one who has been trained in the classical form of the language. Cicero was totally unable to understand the Salian hymns, and no ordinary Englishman could, without a vocabulary, explain the meaning of Layamon's Brut; but place side by side a page of Herodotus, a page of Plutarch, a page of Anna Comnena, and a page of Trikupi, and any clever schoolboy would be able to construe any one of them with equal facility, and could thus contrast the style and language of a Greek historian who flourished 450 years before Christ with the style and language of Greek historians who flourished, respectively 70, 1110, and 1860 years after Christ. (iii.) Nor, in the third place, is this all, for during no small portion of these ages we possess documents of this language in various *dialects*. Had Sanskrit never been discovered, yet if the main conception of comparative



philology had once suggested itself to the mind of scholars, some of the most valuable linguistic laws might still have been established from a comparison with each other of the Greek dialects alone. Their skilful combination would have furnished us with a near approximation to not a few of the original Aryan forms;<sup>1</sup> and as dialects continue to exist even in modern Greek, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the amount of philological insight which could be attained by a comparative study of the forms of this single language, in all its rich and numerous varieties, from the Æolic of 1,000 B.C., to the Tzaconian<sup>2</sup> of to-day.

In the little linguistic tree given on a previous page, it will be observed that from the Græco-Italic stem issue, on either side, two dotted lines representing respectively the Albanian<sup>3</sup> and the Wallachian. The Wallachian, of which we shall speak hereafter, stands in the same relation to Latin as Albanian does to Greek. The true position of Albanian has long been a subject of inquiry and dispute. That it is, however, essentially an Aryan language, although largely intermixed with other elements, is now universally admitted.<sup>4</sup> In spite of its Turkish and other agglomerations, if Xylander be correct in his computation that one-fifth of the words are of Latin and one-eighth of Greek origin, we can hardly be far wrong in regarding it as a

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, such books as Ahrens, *De Dialectis*; Curtius, *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie*; and Leo Meyer, *Vergl. Gramm. d. griech. und latein. Sprachen*.

<sup>2</sup> The Tzaconian is a dialect spoken on the southern shores of the Gulf of Nauplia. See an interesting tract by M. Deville, *Le Dialecte tzaconien*.

<sup>3</sup> The Albanians occupy parts of the ancient Epirus and Illyrium. They call themselves Skipetars or Mountaineers, and the Turks call them Arnauts (=Arbanites). A specimen of an Albanian song may be found in the notes to the second canto of *Chiilde Harold*.

<sup>4</sup> Bopp, in his treatise *Ueber das Albanesische*, 1855, said that it 'zwar entschieden der indo-europäischen Familie angehört, aber in ihren Grundbestandtheilen mit keiner der übrigen Sanskritschwestern unsres Erdtheils in einem engeren, oder gar in einem Abstammungs-verhältnisse steht.' p. 1.

debased representative of the yet undivided Græco-Italic, which Professor Pott calls the Illyrian,<sup>1</sup> and which some may prefer to call the Pelasgic stem. 'It probably preceded the Hellenes,' says Pott, 'in its occupation of the Greek peninsula, and was afterwards broken by the Hellenic tribes pressing onwards from the north, and partly displaced. If the famous name of Pelasgoi had really an ethnic meaning, and were not an unsubstantial and merely chronological designation of early aborigines in general, the Illyrian would best answer to this name.'

iii. The Italic family has hardly been of less importance to us, and to the human race, than the Hellenic. Many a century must still continue to elapse before the world ceases to feel the stern grasp of their once iron hand. How deeply interesting are all the lines which radiate from the Italic centre on the annexed table, the dead Oscan and Umbrian, the dead Provençal and Langue d'Oil, and the living Romance languages, which are affiliated to Latin by so direct a descent,—which are, in fact, little more than Latin subjected to a progressive analysis,—of which one is the language of Camoens, and one the language of Calderon and of Cervantes, and one the language of Dante and Tasso, and one the language of Bossuet and of Descartes. The language of the Italic family cannot boast of the subtle grace, harmony, and finish of Greek, any more than its ancient literature can be placed in comparison with that of the Hellenes. The Latin verb, as an instrument for the expression of accurate thought, is immensely inferior to the Greek. It bears the stamp of such obvious defects as a

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<sup>1</sup> In an admirable letter to Professor Max Müller (*Survey of Languages*, p. 60, 2nd ed.). 'The old Illyrian,' he says, 'is one of the most comprehensive and most ancient stocks of Europe, though at present it exists only as a ruin. In this respect it is like the Iberian, represented by the small remnant of the Basks, and the Rhætian, probably closely allied with the Etruscan.' The chief works on the Albanian are (besides that of Bopp, quoted in the previous note) and Xylander, Hahn, *Albanesische Studien*, 1854; Reinhold, *Noctes Pelasgicæ*, 1855; Fallmerayer, *Ueb. Urspr. und Alterth. der Albanesen*, 1868.

loss of the aorist, and of the perfect participle active. The absence of an article is another mark of inferiority, and perhaps from the rude contact of some aboriginal language Latin lost, more and more, its original flexibility. The fact that the necessity for synthesis in our scientific nomenclature drives us to frame it almost entirely from Greek elements, when we should so much more naturally have gone to Latin, shows how completely Latin had lost the faculty for framing compound words. Yet with what wonderful force does the renovating power of language remedy these defects, and frame even out of its own deficiencies new elements of compression and strength. One might say that, like the *Gallionella Ferruginea*, the Latin language had articulations of iron. It is pre-eminently 'the voice of Empire and of Law, of War and of the State,—the best language for the measured research of History, and the indignant declamation of moral satire ; rigid in its constructions, parsimonious in its synonyms ; yet majestic in its bareness, impressive in its conciseness ; the true language of history, instinct with the spirit of nations, and not with the passions of individuals ; breathing the maxims of the world, and not the tenets of the schools ; one and uniform in its air and spirit, whether touched by the stern and haughty Sallust, by the open and discursive Livy, by the reserved and thoughtful Tacitus.'

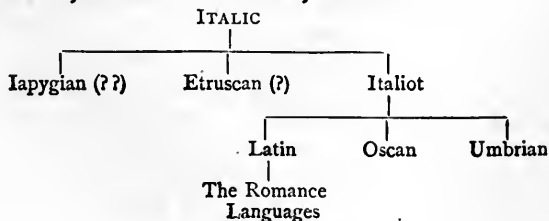
With Greek and Latin alone as the instruments of education, we possess, if only we knew how to use them rightly, not only the keys to the richest and mightiest literature of the ancient world, but also the best means for the proper comprehension of human language as an expression of the inmost nature of man's mind. There is, perhaps, scarcely one principle of speech which could not be illustrated and rendered easily comprehensible by an intelligent instruction in these two classical languages ; and by a comparison of Latin with Italian, or French, or Spanish, we may learn in a most interesting manner that law of progress from synthesis to analysis, which is, in fact, nothing else than the process of perpetual renovation in the midst of perpetual

decomposition, which willingly sacrifices grace of form for distinctness of expression, and which gains in simplicity and general adaptability for every purpose what it loses in intensity and finish. No profound knowledge of metaphysics is attainable without a careful study of the phenomena of language; and in no languages can metaphysical phenomena be better studied than in Latin and Greek. It is only our way of handling the classical languages which makes them so ludicrously infructuous for educational purposes; it is only because we sacrifice a knowledge of literature, and of all that makes a language best worth learning, to an idle and painful attempt to make *all boys alike* do something which is miscalled 'composition;' it is only because teachers think they have done their duty when they have spent years in failing to hammer into youthful minds the recollection of a few paradigms and two or three dozen of common idioms, not one of which has ever been reasonably explained to them; it is only because in the days of Bopp, and Grimm, and Pott, and Schleicher, classics are taught considerably worse than they were in the days of Erasmus—it is, I say, only on these accounts that the whole system of classical instruction has fallen into natural disrepute. It is not surprising that men should declare it time to lay the axe at the root of a tree which so many of its professed guardians condemn to a hopeless sterility incapable of producing either leaves or fruit.

In ancient Italy we can trace the existence of three entirely separate languages:<sup>1</sup> the Iapygian, which was

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<sup>1</sup> We may tabulate the Italic family as follows:—



gradually driven into the extreme south, and is probably the aboriginal language of the peninsula; the Etruscan, of which we know but little, but which appears to have had at least some Aryan affinities; and the Italic, in which are observable three main dialects—Latin, Oscan, and Umbrian.<sup>1</sup> Oscan lasted down to the time of the empire, but is now only known to us by various inscriptions. The most important remains of Umbrian are to be found in the celebrated Eugubine tables—seven bronzed tablets found at Gubbio, the ancient Iguvium.

Of Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese,—languages which may be studied with the utmost ease by any one desirous of doing so, it is needless to speak,<sup>2</sup> but we may say a word about the less known Wallachian, or *limba romanesca*. It is divided by the Danube into two dialects, the northern and southern,<sup>3</sup> and, as already remarked, stands in much the same relation to Latin that Albanian does to Greek. Its grammar, except in the postposition of the article (e.g. *ochiu'l* for *oculus ille*, 'the eye')<sup>4</sup> closely

<sup>1</sup> The main works on Oscan and Umbrian are: Mommsen, *Oskische Studien*; Lepsius, *De tabulis Eugubinis*; Aufrecht and Kirchhoff, *Die umbrischen Sprachdenkmäler*, 1849–1851.

<sup>2</sup> French, as will be seen from the table, is a descendant of the Langue d'oil, i.e. of the dialect in which oil (=hoc illud = *oui*) was used for 'yes;'; in Provençal *oc* (=hoc) was used for 'yes.' Similarly German was sometimes called the Langue d'*j*ð or *ja*, and Italian the *Langue de s* (Dante, *De Vulg. Eloq.*, i. 8). Cf. *Inferno*, cant. xxxiii. 79:—

'Ahi Pisa, vituperio delle genti  
Del bel paese là dove il *s* suona.'

The dominion of French as *par excellence* the language of cultivated society began very early. In 1275 a Venetian writer says that it 'court parmi le monde,' and Brunetto Latini, Dante's master, writing his *Trésor* in French, does so 'parce que la parlure de France est plus commune à toutes gens et plus délectable.'

<sup>3</sup> Of the Northern or Daco-Romanic dialect there is a grammar and small dictionary by Clemens, 1836 (2nd ed.), and a grammar by Alexi; of the Southern or Macedo-Wallachian there is a grammar by Bojadschi, 1803, and Ad. Mussafia, 1868.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. 'Omu'l este moritoriu,' man is mortal. A similar peculiarity is found in Basque.

resembles that of the other Romance languages, but it has adopted a new alphabet based on the Cyrillic,<sup>1</sup> and has borrowed from its neighbours a large number of Slavonic words. Pott<sup>2</sup> believes the Wallachians to belong to a common national stock with the Albanians as far as their *blood*, not as far as their *language*, is concerned. 'The Wallachian,' he says, 'is decidedly a Romanic language. It owes its origin chiefly to Roman colonies sent into Dacia by Trajan. Yet both Albanians and Wallachians are, in blood, descendants of the ancient Illyrians.'

The Romaunt and Provençal dialect—the language of the Troubadours—is dead, and the patois which mainly owe their origin to it, and which are known as Rhæto-roman, Romanisch, Churwälsch, or Engadinisch, are too unimportant to need special notice.<sup>3</sup>

II. The other great divergent group which streamed away from the yet stationary Iranian and Indian families may be called the Slavo-Letto-Teutonic, of which we must next proceed briefly to speak.

iv. The Teutons,<sup>4</sup> pressing ever westward, split into two branches, a northern or Scandinavian, and a southern or Teutonic branch.<sup>5</sup> Before we say anything about it you may be interested to see the clear form in which Schleicher represents the genealogical affinity of its branches.

This linguistic tree explains itself, but we may briefly say that when the Teutonic had begun a course independent of

<sup>1</sup> Some account of the Cyrillic alphabet may be found in Max Müller's *Survey of Language*, p. 44 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Max Müller, *ubi supra*, p. 62.

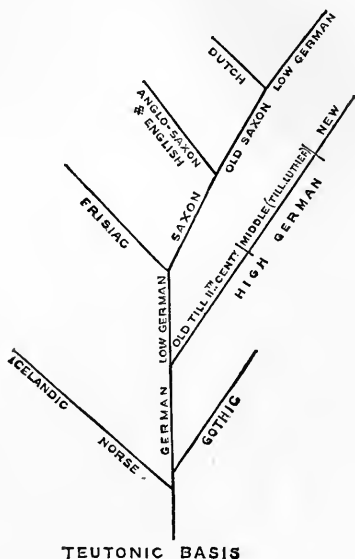
<sup>3</sup> Such books as there are on the *patois*—chiefly a grammar and dictionary by Conradi—are mentioned by Benfey, *Gesch. d. Sprachw.* 652.

<sup>4</sup> Both 'Deutsch' and 'Teut' are derived from *thind*, 'people.' So Innu, the name by which the Eskimo call themselves, means 'a man;' and Illinois is a corruption of *Illeni*, which has a similar meaning. The derivation of German is much disputed, but probably it is connected with 'guerre,' and means 'warrior.'

<sup>5</sup> Schleicher, *Die Deutsche Sprache*, p. 81.

the Slavo-lettic division it parted into three directions, viz. Gothic, German proper, and Norse.

a. The Old Norse, the genuine language of Scandinavia, was best and longest preserved in Iceland, where it continues with but little alteration to the present day. It possesses for us an immortal interest, not only because of its linguistic value, but because in it alone are preserved those songs and legends which elsewhere were swept away or



essentially altered by the jealousy of Christian converts, but which, undisturbed in that far-off corner of the world, reveal to us the grand and striking mythology of our heathen ancestors. The Eddas, though not perhaps older, in their present form, than the tenth century, are yet of priceless value, not only for their own intrinsic beauty, but because from them alone can we learn of what stuff our heroic ancestors were made.

The Swedish and Danish may be called New Norse; they have become more analytical than Old Norse, and have undergone modification from literary culture and foreign influence. Norwegian has sunk into little more than a Danish dialect.

b. Gothic is on every ground a language which we must regard with great interest and curiosity. It is the oldest representative of Low German, to which it stands in much the same relation as Sanskrit does to the other European languages. Its sole remaining documents—the fragments of a calendar, and of the version of the Bible by Bishop Ulphilas,<sup>1</sup> are older by three centuries than any other Teutonic literature. Unless we possessed this mutilated version, happily preserved in a single MS. of the fifth century, the celebrated Codex Argenteus at Upsala, it would be almost impossible to see the connection of such languages as German and English with the Aryan stem. For the Gothic language is absolutely dead—more so even than Greek and Latin, because it has left no direct descendants. Like the Lithuanian, it retained the dual, and it possessed a middle voice, which even Lithuanian has lost; it also retained the reduplication of the perfect,<sup>2</sup> and a fuller and less mutilated system of inflections than any other Teutonic dialect. It was mainly the study of Gothic which led Grimm to the discovery of his famous law, and which rendered possible that historical grammar of his native

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<sup>1</sup> Ulphilas is the Latin form of his Gothic name, Vulfila. He was a bishop of the Arian Goths, born 318, made bishop in 348, and died at Constantinople in 388. Instead of the old linear runic characters, he introduced an alphabet founded on the Greek. See Beisel, *Ueb. das Leben des Ulfilas*, 1860. The reader who wishes for some conception of Gothic may obtain it from a little book, *Auswahl aus Ulfilas' goth. Bibelübersetz., mit einem Wörterb. u. s. w.*, von K. A. Kahn. Heidelberg, 1865—without going to larger and more expensive works like those of Löbe and Schulze. A new grammar by Leo Meyer has just appeared.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. *valda*, perf. *vaivald*; *haita*, perf. *haihait*; *skaida*, perf. *skaighaid*, &c.



language which will long remain as a splendid memorial of his learning and patriotism.

c. German proper divided itself into low and high German; and low German again into Frisian and Saxon. From the Saxon was developed in one direction Anglo-Saxon and English, and in another Dutch. The only literary monument of the old Saxon is the *Hêljand* a life of our Saviour drawn from the Gospels, and written in alliterative metre. It will be observed that the Frisian branch of Saxon is parallel to Anglo-Saxon, and in fact resembles English almost as closely as it resembles German. Every one knows the old rhyme,

Bread, butter, and cheese,  
Is good English and good Friese.

It never was a literary language, and is now almost dead, except in the mouths of the sailors and the uneducated classes in Northern Germany, on the shores of the Baltic.

English, a language which has produced a literature equalled by few and surpassed by none, is of course the main glory of this branch of the Teutonic language. Modern German belongs to the high German branch, and had three epochs in its development, viz. Old High German, down to the eleventh century, Middle High German, down to Luther, and New High German,<sup>1</sup> dating from Luther's translation of the Bible, which at once enriched and ennobled the language, and rendered it permanent in its present form.<sup>2</sup> Certainly this Teutonic stem of the Aryan tree, bearing on two of its branches such 'bright consummate flowers' as English on the one hand and German on the other, may challenge comparison with the noblest and most fruitful scions of the noblest and most

<sup>1</sup> For the distinguishing marks of the Old, Middle, and New High German see Schleicher, *Die Deutsche Sprache*, 95-108.

<sup>2</sup> Luther says that in his version he used no special dialect of German, but only the highest and best form of it: 'welcher nachfolgen alle Fürsten und Könige in Deutschland.'

fruitful stock. India may bring her Vedas and her Mahabharata, and Persia her Zend Avesta and Sháh Námeḥ, and Greece her Homeric poems,—and Rome may more than supplement the whole mass of her narrow, haughty, and unoriginal literature by claiming the glory of the Divina Commedia, and the Lusiad, and the Poem of the Cid,—but can any or all of them vaunt any superiority over the Teuton, who developed among his various descendants languages so lovely and noble, so strong and flexible, so subtle and wise, so intense and musical,—languages so rich with all treasures of Poetry, Science, Philosophy, Eloquence, and History, as the languages of the Eddas and the Niebelungen, and of our early ballads,—the languages of Kant and Goethe and Schiller, of Shakspeare, of Milton, and of Wordsworth,—the languages carried by commercial enterprise from Zembla to Tierra del Fuego,—the languages which the thought of Germany, and the majesty of England, and the ebullient energy of America have elevated into the ruling languages of the political and intellectual world?

v. The Slavonic<sup>1</sup> family, or, as some people prefer to call it, the Windic, may be very briefly dismissed. The members of it, when they have defæcated their political existence of the Asiatic dregs of despotism and serfdom, are probably destined to play a very mighty part in the history of humanity. But at present they have barely emerged from a long-continued barbarism; they have developed no very important or original literature, nor can we even vouchsafe the name of history to the insignificant and blood-stained annals of their imperial autocrats.<sup>2</sup>

For our present purpose it will be sufficient merely to

<sup>1</sup> The word Slav is of uncertain derivation. Professor Senkovski derives it from the root *slav-chlov*- 'man' (Russian, *cheloväku*; Polish, *czlowiek*=*slovak*). Others derive it from *srn*, *slu*, Greek *κλυ*- in the sense of *κλυτός*, 'famous.'

<sup>2</sup> A considerable school of ethnologists and philologists would deny to the Russians *as a nation* the right to belong to the Slavonic stock. See especially a very elaborate work, *Peuples Aryas et Tourans*, par

refer to the table for a sufficient indication of the Slavonic languages and dialects. All we need here mention is that the oldest monuments of the language are to be found in Old Bulgarian or Old Church Slavic of the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

vi. The divisions of Lettic may also be seen sufficiently in the table and map. Its most important branch is the Lithuanian, which possesses indeed but little literature except certain *dainos*, or popular songs, but which, in consequence of its centuries of isolation, has preserved to an extraordinary extent all the living, and many, elsewhere extinct, elements of Aryan speech. It still retains, for instance, the dual number, and no less than seven out of the eight Sanskrit cases. The Old Prussian, which has been dead for two centuries, is only represented by the Catechism of Albert of Brandenburg. The Lettish, spoken in Courland and Livonia, is only a modernised form of Lithuanian.

III. The last to linger by the old cradle were the Aryans proper, who subsequently divided into Iranians and Hindoos.

vii. The name Iranian is derived from *arya*, and the oldest representatives of the language are the Old Persian and the Old Bactrian. The Old Persian is the language of many of the cuneiform inscriptions of the Achæmenid dynasty. The Old Bactrian or Zend is the language of the Avesta, the sacred writings of the Zoroastrian religion; Huzvâresch, or Pehlevi, is the language in which the

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F. H. Duchîński (de Kiew). Paris, 1864. Madame de Staël called Moscow 'Rome tartare,' and M. Mérimée writes, 'Par une brillante journée d'hiver Moscou c'est Constantinople en pelisse, c'est l'Orient gelé.'—*Une année en Russie*.

<sup>1</sup> The reader may find ample information about the various Slavonic dialects in Max Müller's *Survey of Languages*, 67-84. The only ones which have any literary interest are the Polish and the Servian. (On the poems of a really remarkable Polish poet, Count Krasinski, Mr. Lytton (Owen Meredith) has founded his *Orval* and *Christmas Eve*: he has also written some beautiful versions of Servian songs.) Polabish is a dead dialect once spoken on the Elbe.

commentaries and more recent versions of the Avesta are written. The great Epic poem of Firdousi, the Sháh Námeḥ, or Book of Kings, which, besides the Avesta, is the only very memorable work produced in this family, is in Parsi or Pazend. The modern Persian is a degenerate scion of it, greatly impoverished in grammatical forms, and degraded by a large admixture of Arabic and other words.<sup>1</sup>

viii. The Indian Family, so named from their long sojourn on the upper Indus,<sup>2</sup> is the family whose language was Sanskrit, whose religious poems were the Vedas, and from the bosom of which arose the venerable and widespread religion of Buddhism, preached by the Hindoo prince, Sakya-Mouni. Though India was their latest conquest, to which they made their way along the southern spurs of the Himalayas, it is on them that the light of historical knowledge first dawns, and it is from the discovery of the dead language which they once spoke that its latest science, the science of Comparative Philology, has sprung. Of Sanskrit we have already spoken. It has been gradually decomposed into the modern dialects of India and Ceylon, and it has a mutilated and degraded descendant in the language of the Gipsies, which in grammar is Aryan, although its vocabulary is a sort of common sewer into which the argots of nearly every nation of Asia and Europe have been discharged.

Having thus glanced at the eight varieties of speech which compose the Aryan Unity, a careful study of the map and table which accompany this lecture will impress still more deeply on the mind the importance and interest of the facts which we have thus passed in review. Every day will add to their significance, because they reveal the changes which

<sup>1</sup> More or less connected with Persian are the Pushtu of Afghanistan, the language of Bokhara, of the Kurds, the Armenian, and the Ossetian. For further information respecting these languages see Max Müller, *Survey of Languages*, pp. 32-36.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that the Aryan Hindoos did not begin to advance into the peninsula of India before B.C. 1,000, and that they did not reach the Deccan (*dakshin* = South) before B.C. 450.

have taken place over vast areas of the world's surface, and the original affinities of the most active and civilised races of mankind. Even since this lecture was written, recent events, on which these considerations ought not to be without their bearing, have attracted the attention of the civilised world. We spoke but briefly of the great Slavonic race, because of its comparative unimportance when brought into contrast with the Hellenic, the Italic, or the Teutonic. Yet even since this lecture was written, the progress and development of that race have given rise to grave political questions, and have caused us a legitimate anxiety with respect to its future intentions. For in the case of this great Slavonic nation there has been, as it were, a regurgitation of the Aryan wave. Emigrating originally to the westward, they filled the immense regions which they had so long occupied, and are now flowing back again over the paths they traversed in their first departure. Persia has been long subjected to their influence : at this moment all Turkestan is practically theirs. Since Peter the Great, in 1772, took Derbent, on the Caspian, from Persia, they have been constantly pushing their encroachments farther and farther towards the East.<sup>1</sup> So that, as you see, the two branches of our race who stayed longest in the mother country and wandered from it least far—the Persians and the Hindoos—have both been subjugated by returning families of their western brethren. We of the Teutonic race, travelling in our commercial energy over half the globe, came to India by sea, and have forced it to acknowledge our dominion : the Slavonic race, flowing back in what Æschylus calls a *κῦμα χερσαῖον*, or dry-land wave, have overflowed Persia by land, and reached the borders of Afghanistan. Soon these two younger brothers—the Slavonian and the Teuton—the former Lord of the Iranian, the latter of the Hindoo, will gaze at each other face to face

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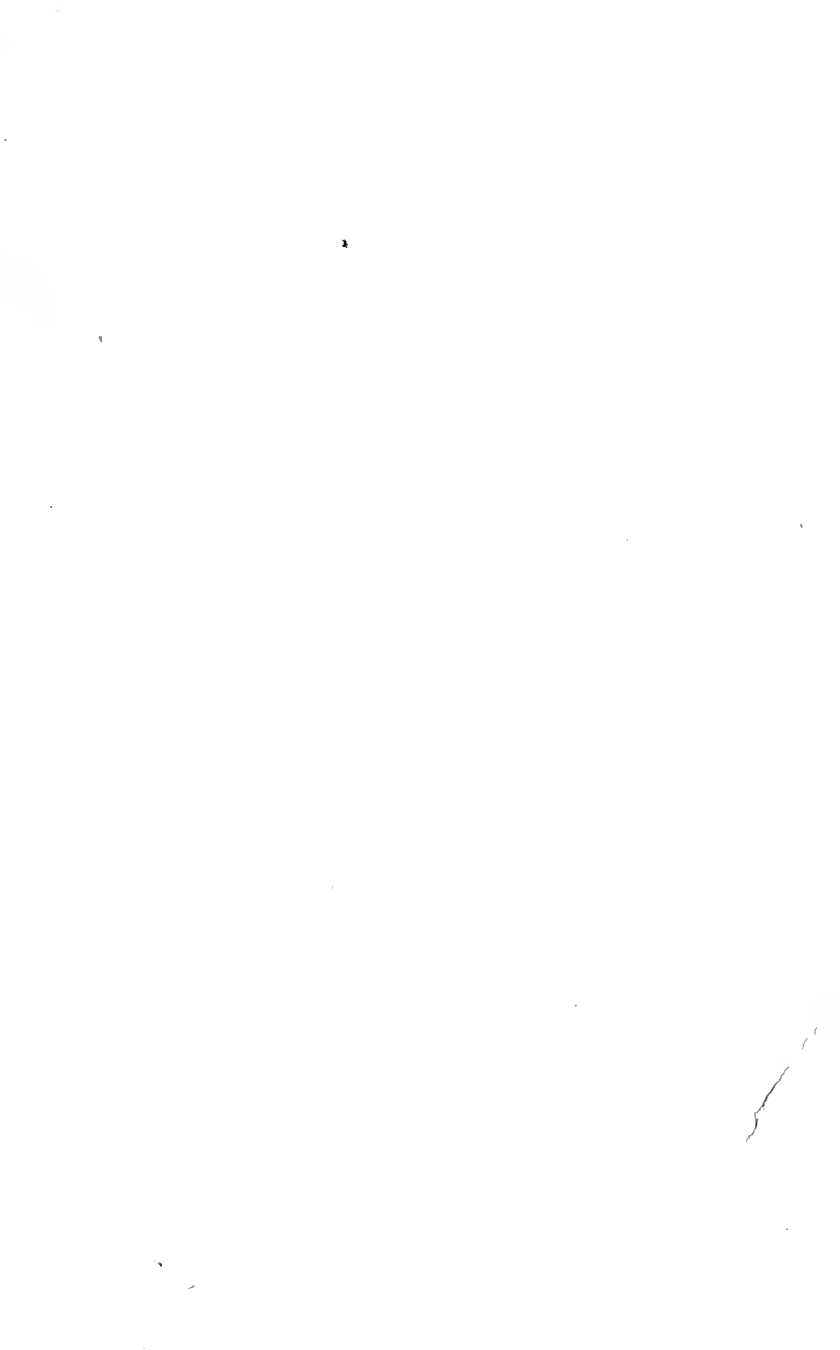
<sup>1</sup> No book gives a more vivid impression of the growth of Russian influence in these directions than M. Arminius Vámbery's *Travels in Turkestan*.

from opposite heights of the great Himalayan range. Shall we meet as brothers or as enemies? Shall our intercourse be the intercourse of mutual amity or of deadly warfare? <sup>1</sup> Let the knowledge of our past history decide us in favour of pacific and beneficent counsels. And so, contemplating this great tidal march of Aryan emigration as it encircles the globe, let us see that it be for the cleansing and the blessing of the world. Then it shall be with us as though the Angel of the Nations had waved his hand, and calling to him the powers which guard the progress and happiness of mankind, had addressed their leader in the words of our great poet:

‘ Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the South  
With strictest watch; these others wheel the North,  
Our circuit meets full West.’

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<sup>1</sup> Mons. Duchiniński's book, previously quoted, is a striking proof of the importance of race-considerations. After trying to prove that the Russians are in great measure Finns and Mongols, he quotes with approbation a remark of M. Reville: ‘Le Kosaque, le Tartare, le Mongol—voilà l'éternel ennemi de notre race.’—*Peuples Aryas*, p. xv. M. Reville fully recognises the importance of the Aryan theory to the security and happiness of our Indian Empire: ‘On prétend que déjà les Hindous les plus éclairés reconnaissent cette vérité qui met leur amour-propre à l'aise, et se montrent bien plus disposés qu'auparavant à faire cause commune avec les Européens contre leurs anciens envahisseurs.’—*Rev. des Deux Mondes*, 1864, p. 727.







## LECTURE III.

HAVING, then, in my two previous Lectures endeavoured to sketch the steps in the discovery of the great Aryan Unity, the remarkable insight which it gives us into early History, and the most important conclusions which it naturally suggests, I must now ask your attention to the only other great Family of highly-cultivated and inflectional languages, one which has been of hardly less importance than the Aryan in the world's development—I mean the Semitic; the family of which Arabic is the most polished and by far the most widely disseminated, but of which Hebrew is the most important and interesting member. A glance at the map will show that the Semitic languages are confined to a much smaller area than those with which we have been dealing. The nations which speak them do not probably comprise more than 40,000,000 of the human race, as compared with some 400,000,000 of the Aryan nations.

The general unity of this Family of Languages—of which you see a table before you—is so obvious that it has been recognised for centuries. Even St. Jerome classed them together as the Oriental languages. The first to apply to them the name Semitic<sup>1</sup> was Eichhorn. He did so because in that inestimable fragment of antique ethnography, the 10th chapter of Genesis, Shem is represented as the father of Elam, Assur, Lud, and Aram—who represent the inhabitants of Elymais, Assyria, Lydia, and Syria; and of Arphaxad, who has two grandsons, Eber, the ancestor of the Hebrews, and Joktan, the earliest ancestor of the

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<sup>1</sup> I adopt the form Semitic rather than Shemitic, simply because it is more euphonious, and has acquired a greater currency.

Arabians.<sup>1</sup> The name Semitic involves, indeed, a multitude of hypotheses. It is suggested by the Bible, and yet can hardly be called Biblical, if Genesis x. be regarded as *historic* ethnography. The writer of that chapter in enumerating the nations of his own race, excludes the Phœnicians, who almost certainly were Semites, but who are there put down among the descendants of Ham: he excludes the Babylonians, whose claim to be Semites is strongly maintained; and includes the Assyrians, whose connection with the Babylonians was very close. If, however, Semitic be understood as a purely conventional term, representing geographically and roughly the central zone of Western Asia, it is not without its conveniences, although it will be seen that on the analogy of the term Indo-European we might call these languages the Syro-Arabian. At present they are only spoken in and near the Arabian peninsula and the neighbouring parts of Africa. In Europe they are represented solely by the Maltese, which is a mixture of Arabic and Italian,—by a certain infusion into that singularly mixed form of human speech, the Turkish,—and by a small number of words, chiefly compounded with the Arabic article *el*, which have been bequeathed by them to Spanish, or have accidentally infiltrated into other European languages.<sup>2</sup> The accompanying table will represent clearly to the eye that there are three branches of the family: a *Southern* branch, the direct parent of Arabic and its dialects, of the dead language of the Himyaritic inscriptions, and of Abyssinian as spoken in Tigré and Gondar: a *Northern* or Aramaic branch which split into two, viz. a western division, to which belongs modern Syriac and its

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<sup>1</sup> I call him their *earliest* ancestor, because the Arabians themselves draw a distinction between the Arab el-Aribeh, the pure and genuine Arabs, and the Arab el-Mustaaribeh, or descendants of Ishmael, whom they look upon as the representatives of a later stock.

<sup>2</sup> Such as elixir, alcove, algebra, alcohol, alchemy, &c. ; also cotton, caraffe, magazine, admiral, coffee, saffron, camel, cipher, orange, zenith, nadir, &c.

dialects, and an eastern division, to which are believed to have belonged the languages of Assyria and Babylon ; and a *Central* branch of surpassing interest and importance, since in it are comprised three such dead languages as Hebrew, Phœnician, and Carthaginian.

Now at the top of the table you will see written the word Egyptian over a *dotted* line, which represents that the language so indicated is dead, and continued into a *firm* line, over which is written the word Coptic.<sup>1</sup> This is done in deference to the opinion of various scholars that the ancient Egyptian represents the most primitive form of Semitic speech, in which case of course the Coptic, which is its lineal representative, would also be regarded as a Semitic language. Now in the Bible *Mizraim*, the common name of Egypt, is made a son of *Ham*, not of *Shem*, and to this fact we should of course attach a very considerable importance in deciding *against* the Semitic origin of the Egyptians, were it not almost certain that these invaluable Biblical genealogies in Genesis x. are meant to point rather to great geographic zones than to direct ethnological affinities. The facts respecting the Egyptian language are these. While some of those who argue most strongly for its Semitic character admit that on the whole it differs as widely from Semitic as Semitic from Aryan, they yet prove that in the pronouns and in the manner of affixing them, in the numerals, in the assimilation of consonants, in the subordination and instability of the vowel, and in other general syntactical features, it presents a Semitic aspect ; on the other hand it is argued that, side by side with these Semitic elements are found Hamitic or Negritian elements of a wholly different character ; that in roots (the majority of which are monosyllabic) it differs very widely from Semitic languages ; that many of the grammatical resemblances reduce themselves to that vague general identity of form without which human

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<sup>1</sup> Ægypt is derived by some from αἴα κόπτος. Copt is a corruption of the word Ægypti (as is also Gipsy, which rests on a false assumption).

language would not be human language at all; that in general character, no less than in physical formation, this dark race, whose very name of Chamite may indicate their swarthy complexion, differs widely from the fairer Semites. Whether or not Typhon was to the Egyptian mind a personification of all that they detested in that race, there is at any rate an obvious contrast between the complexions indicated by the name Chami on the one hand, and Edomite, Himyarite, Erythrean, and Phœnician on the other.<sup>1</sup> It is certain too, that, whether they stood to each other in the relation of conquerors or conquered, the Jews and the Egyptians regarded each other with cordial abhorrence.<sup>2</sup> The soberest conclusion seems to be to consider the question as still an open one, and for the present to exclude Egyptian from the dignity of being a kind of ante-historic Semitism. It must be classed with a separate branch of Hamitic languages, such as Berber and Touareg, which extend along the entire north of Africa, and which, while they were still in a condition of 'primordial fusibility,' i.e. while they were still plastic and impressible to a degree not possible at a more developed stage, were undoubtedly subjected to a period of powerful and continuous Semitic influences.

The next important question that meets us in looking at this table is the question whether the Babylonian and Assyrian languages, as known from some of the cuneiform inscriptions, were really Semitic or not. Here too I will content myself with a mere recapitulation of the elements which we possess for the decision. Turning first to the Bible we find that Nimrod, the son of Cush, and the founder of Babylon, is a son *not of Shem but of Ham*; and

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<sup>1</sup> Chämi = *Atθλωψ* = black; Edom and Himyer = red; Erythrean is from *ἐρυθρός*, and Phœnician from *φολνξ*. It is of course possible that the names alluded to the colours of the soils, and not to the complexion of the races which inhabited them.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Go ye not into Egypt' of Jeremiah (xlii. 20), was a prohibition wrung from centuries of evil experience.

that although Asshur, the supposed Hero Eponymus of the Assyrians, is made a son of Shem, yet the conquest and colonisation of his land is again ascribed to Nimrod. We find also from Isaiah (xxxiii. 19),<sup>1</sup> and from the story of Rabshakeh in the Book of Kings (2 Kings xviii. 26), that the language of Assyria was unintelligible to the Hebrews, and was even regarded by them as a stammering or ridiculous speech, and that the deadliest enmity raged between these peoples. We must therefore believe the notion of the Jews themselves to have been that the *original* inhabitants of Assyria were of the same, and the original inhabitants of Babylon of a *different*, stock from themselves; and that the latter had at a very early period subdued or expelled the former. Turning to linguistic evidence, we find the acknowledged fact that the ancient names of Assyria and Babylonia are clearly Semitic. *Rehoboth*, the Assyrian city mentioned in Gen. x. 11, like the Greek Plataea, means 'streets.' *Gaugamela*, 'the camel's house,' where Alexander defeated Darius, *Zab*, the river of the wolf, Adramelech, Anammelech, Rabsaris, Rabshakeh, Belus, Belodan, are all obviously and confessedly Semitic words. To this it is objected that these may be merely Hebrew versions of the real Assyrian words, just as the river Zab was called by the Greeks Δύζος by changing the meaning into Greek;—or mere corruptions of the true names, just as Beersheba, the well of the oath, becomes in Arabic Beer el Seba, the well of the lion, or as the Greeks called butter βούτυρον, as though it came from βούς and τυρόν, although it was a wholly different word, of Scythian origin.<sup>2</sup> Such conjectures,

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<sup>1</sup> 'A people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive, of a stammering (marg. ridiculous) tongue that thou canst not understand.'—Is. xxxiii. 19. There is some probability that Rabshakeh was an apostate Jew.

<sup>2</sup> So the English soldiers always spoke of Surajah Dowlas, as Sir Roger Dowlas. The French sailors have corrupted the name of the island *Belopoulos* into *Belle Poule*. The Venetians metamorphosed Egripo into Negropont, &c. See *Origin of Language*, pp. 57-61 *Chapters on Language*, p. 232.

it must be admitted, are hardly probable. That the Babylonian and Assyrian contained strong Semitic *elements* may be regarded as settled by the labours of such scholars as Sir Henry Rawlinson, Dr. Hincks, M. Oppert, and others ; but on the other hand, M. Renan, who on the Semitic languages is a high authority, considers the evidence insufficient to prove that they actually belonged to the Semitic *family*, and he brings against that theory the objection that the Semites had an alphabet of their own ; that this alphabet, with slight modifications, was common to every single member of the family ; that remains which have been discovered show it to have been actually in use both in Assyria and Babylonia ; and that, had the language of the inscriptions been really a Semitic language, it is inconceivable that the cuneiform characters would have been used in writing it. I cannot say that the objection seems to be *conclusive* ; but it may, I think, be said with diffidence that the Babylonian and Assyrian were *mixed* languages, and that they cannot with any safety be placed in the acknowledged Semitic family without the note of interrogation I have ventured to place against them in the table as it stands. Perhaps the hypothesis of Renan, that the basis of the Assyro-Babylonian nationality was an Hamitic race, resembling that of Egypt, that this was succeeded by a large Semitic population, and that this in turn was finally dominated over by a small aristocracy of Aryan warriors and statesmen, is the one which reconciles the greatest number of the difficulties with which the whole question is confessedly surrounded.

Of the Arabian or southern branch I do not purpose to speak, although the Arabs are perhaps the most original of the Semitic nations. Their influence on the mind of Europe was at one time immense, and for mercantile purposes the modern Arabic is still very widely disseminated. Nor will it be necessary to do more than allude to the two lines which here radiate from this branch, and which represent African offshoots of the Semitic languages. For

these the name *sub-Semitic*, rather than Semitic, has been proposed. The Ethiopic is now a dead language, and its chief monument, as in the case of Gothic, Cornish, Old Bulgarian, and other languages, is a version of the Bible. The *Gheez*, which is a language of Tigré, in the north-east of Abyssinia, and which is the sacred and literary language of the country, is its modern descendant and representative. But for general purposes the Gheez has been ousted by the *Anharic*, an ancient idiom parallel to the Gheez, but not derived from it, and more barbarous in its general character. It is believed to be the representative of the dead language of south-western Arabia, which is only preserved in the Himyaritic inscriptions. Passing over these two branches with this cursory notice, I may just allude to the Syriac, here indicated as the western division of the Aramaic branch. It is usually called Syro-Chaldee, but the name Chaldee is so vague and misleading that I have purposely excluded it. One point of imperishable interest, however, about this language I must mention. The intense affection of St. Mark, or perhaps we should say rather of St. Peter, who directed him, has in several instances preserved for us the actual words and syllables spoken on certain memorable occasions by our blessed Lord, and from them we see that this dialect was still spoken at the dawn of the Christian era throughout the land

Over whose acres walked those blessed feet  
Which eighteen hundred years ago were nailed  
For our salvation to the bloody cross.

*‘Ephphatha,’ ‘Talitha cumi,’ ‘Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani,’* all belong to that Syriac dialect which prevailed in Palestine since the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and thus came to be ennobled by the utterances of Him who ‘spake as never man spake.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A single verse of Jeremiah, and parts of Ezra and Daniel are in Syriac, as also are the Targums and the Talmud. The Syriac version

Passing to the central division, we naturally take Hebrew for its most characteristic type. Now Hebrew, although like other Semitic languages it is inflectional, yet even from this grammatical point of view differs entirely from any and every language of the Aryan family. Linguistic evidence proves that the Indo-European race sprang from Bactriana. Hebrew tradition, supported by a multitude of concurrent probabilities, points to the almost conterminous regions of Armenia as the cradle of the Semite. And yet Aryan and Semitic speech are the products of organisations wholly different, both artistically and intellectually; their simple sounds, their roots, their syllabic constitution, the entire laws of their composition, are radically diverse. To say nothing of differences in the pronouns and numerals, and the utter illusoriness of the accidental resemblances in the unborrowed words which have been supposed to indicate an original identity, the root of Aryan verbs is all but invariably monosyllabic, consisting of a consonant followed by a vowel, as in *da* 'give,' or *sta* 'stand;' but the root of the Semitic verb is always trilateral, or rather triconsonantic, and therefore necessarily disyllabic, i.e. instead of being, as in Aryan, an *open* syllable, it is always *close* (as in *qtl*, 'to kill;' *dbr*, 'to speak;' *kth*, 'to write'), and in its most elementary form or root consists of two consonants of different organs, such as *Kaph*; of which in the perfect the second letter is often reduplicated, as in *Rabab*. Then, again, whereas in Aryan vocabularies *nine-tenths* of the words are compounds, consisting of verbs with prefixes, or their direct derivatives, in Semitic, on the other hand, there is not such a thing as a compound verb<sup>1</sup> at all. In every Aryan language there are *thousands* of verbs compounded with a preposition; in

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of the Bible, called the Peshito, dates from the second century. Syriac was almost crushed out of existence by Arabic in the tenth century, but it still lingers among a few Nestorian sects.

<sup>1</sup> 'Quin Hebræi tantum compositiones illas refugiant, ut malint metaphorâ abuti quam compositionem introducere.'—Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum*.



Semitic, not a single instance of such a phenomenon occurs. Nor is this all, for not only are the formative words different, but also, which is more characteristic, the mode of attachment is different. In Aryan, if R represent the root and  $\mathfrak{g}$  the inflection, the words are all according to the formula  $R\mathfrak{g}$ , whereas in Semitic they are generally  $\mathfrak{g}R$ , or  $\mathfrak{g}R\mathfrak{g}$ .<sup>1</sup> In Aryan the determinant precedes the thing determined; we say, for instance, river-horse, not horse-river,<sup>2</sup> sea-captain, not captain-sea; in Semitic, on the other hand, such compounds as these are chiefly proper names, and in them, by the very reverse process, the thing determined precedes the determinant; e.g. Samuel means 'asked-God,' but the corresponding word Theætetus, by which Josephus renders it, means 'God-asked;' Beth-*Shemesh* becomes in its Greek form *Heliopolis*, or 'Sun-city;' we say Newtown, or Neapolis, they, as in the name Carthage, said Town-new; we say *Friedrich*, they say Ab-*Salom*; -son is with us a suffix, *Ben*-is with them a prefix. Rich, beautiful, and strikingly simple as was this Aryan procedure, the Semitic mind never attained to it. Given, for instance, any root, the Aryan languages, and particularly some of them — as Sanskrit, Greek, and Russian — can make an immense number of words out of it, by affix upon affix, derivative upon derivative. Given, for instance, such a root as the Sanskrit *stri*, 'to scatter,' and the genius of Aryan speech can, without an effort, fling his immense ærial arch from earth to heaven, and give us indifferently the *star* that scatters its light in space or the *straw* which is littered on the ground; or, given the root *mlag*, and we get at once and indifferently

<sup>1</sup> See Max Müller, *Stratification of Language*, p. 34. He adopts an ingenious notation, suggested, I believe, by Prof. Schleicher, *Deutsche Sprache*, p. 23. Take for instance the root *lmd*, 'he learnt,' and compare *elmôd*, 'I will learn,' *tilmôd*, 'thou wilt learn,' &c., with *discam*, *discas*, &c.; or compare *tithlammedoo*, 'you will teach yourselves,' with *διδάξεσθε*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hippopotamos' is a bad late word of Strabo's; Herodotus and Aristotle use *ἵππος ποδάμιος*. See Chavée, *Les Langues et les Races*, n. 56, to which I am here indebted for several facts.

either the *galaxy* white with the glory of confluent suns, or the *lettuce* with its milky juice. Given such a word as *true*, and we are spontaneously furnished with *true*, *truth*, *truthful*, *truthfully*, *untruthfully*; given the root *voc*, and one gets at once, besides hundreds of other words, *voice*, *vocation*, *revoke*, *vocable*, *revocable*, *irrevocable*, *irrevocability*; given in Russian the words *bez-boza*, 'without God,' and we get at once *bez-boznik*, atheist; *bezboznichat*, atheism; *bezboznichestvo*, the condition of being an atheist; *bezboznichestvo*, to be in the condition of being an atheist; and so on. But this eminently fertile process of word-formation is to the Semitic languages unknown. Once more, in the Aryan languages the *nuances* of words are distinguished by external additions, by suffixes and inflections; but in Hebrew, although there are inflections, the change of meaning is far more extensively and characteristically effected by internal modification. Thus in Greek, *γράμμα* is a writing, *γράφεις*, a writer, *ἔγραψεν*, he wrote; whereas in Hebrew, *SeePheR* is a book, *SoPHeeR* is a writer, and *SâPHaR*, he wrote. Again, in Greek *βασιλεὺς* is a king, and *ἔβασιλευσεν*, he reigned; but in Hebrew *MeLeK* is a king, and the same word, with other vowels, *MâLaK*, he reigned. Thus it is as if in Hebrew the triliteral consonants—which were the only things which appeared in writing at all, the vowels being left absolutely unrepresented—were things too sacred to touch; as though, had they been touched, the whole meaning and fabric of language would have crumbled away; whereas, in the very earliest Aryan period, the consonants are interfered with and obliterated by all kinds of euphonic principles, so that the laws of *sandhi*, or contact—i.e. the various assimilations and dissimilations which consonants undergo under various circumstances—are among the earliest and most intricate parts of Sanskrit grammar. Thus, as Prof. Monier Williams observes, if 'Rara avis in terris' were Sanskrit, it would require to be written as follows in one word, *Rarâvirinsterrih*. Perhaps the method of varying the meaning in the Semitic languages by internal modification

of the vowels, leaving the consonants untouched, is the most singular and unique peculiarity about them. Such variations as in *sing*, *sang*, *song*, are simply due, in the Aryan languages, not to a primitive mechanism, but to an uncommon euphonic accident; but in Hebrew they are the rule, not the exception, and they look like a wholly new linguistic conception, which was the discovery of this family alone.<sup>1</sup>

It is deeply interesting to pursue the contrast of the Aryan and Semitic languages—or, let us say, of two such representatives of them as Greek and Hebrew. The metaphysical subtlety of Greek, its rich variety, its delicate capacity for reflecting the minutest shades of difference in meaning, the extraordinary wealth of its inflections, the softness and music of the language, its lightness, gaiety, voluptuousness, its extraordinary flexibility and precision as a well-understood conventional instrument of human expression, its genial lyric playfulness, the oceanic roll of its oratory, and the sonorous lilt of its epic verse, all contrast strangely and forcibly with the grave unbending stateliness of the Hebrew, its absence of syntax, its inflexible stiffness, its parsimony of construction, its gutturals, and sibilants, its utter vagueness and mistiness, its almost penurious absence of modal and temporal distinctions. One would say that Greek is liquid, and Hebrew metallic; or that Greek is a coloured sun-picture, reproducing with the minute fidelity of Nature herself every shadow on the earth and every ripple on the sea, while Hebrew is a broad, rough, unshaded sketch, in the sweeping strokes of a Michael Angelo or a Tintoretto. To realise the enormous difference between the two languages, it is sufficient to compare their verbs alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Grimm had considered them due to some immediate inexplicable faculty of language; but Bopp, as he had already put to flight the mystical phantasms of Schlegel, showed that in the Aryan languages at any rate these vowel-modifications often had no influence on the sense, and were simply due to the tonic accent and the laws of euphony. See Bréal's ed. of Bopp's *Comp. Gram.* I. xxxvi.

Greek, with the 1,200 inflections of a perfect verb, can and does express an immense variety of temporal and modal conceptions, so that it is impossible to read a page of Sophocles or Thucydides without detecting, in the expressive precision of the tenses, every delicate and almost imperceptible play of feeling in the writer's mind, which even in English we slur over into the one prevalent aorist; but Hebrew does not so much as possess an aorist, or a pluperfect, or even a present, but contents itself with a single vague imperfect and a single vague future. It seems to me that the fundamental distinction between the two languages lay in this: the Greek, with boundless opportunity for style, handled his language as merely an *instrument*, while the Hebrew, regarding his as of Divine origin, could not in any way look upon it as a thing *capable* of conventional modification,<sup>1</sup> and hence stuck as closely as he could to obvious onomatopœias and confessed pictorial metaphors. In short, he never got to the idealisation, or even the individuation, of words; afraid to launch forth, as the Aryan did, into the open sea of language, he never ventured to slip anchor from that narrow coast of it where the sound and the sense, the impression and the idea, are in sight of each other. As for onomatopœias, not only does Hebrew abound in them, but his language itself is one immense echo of natural sounds and primitive sensations. 'When,' says M. Vinet, 'you hear the vast word *haschâmail*, which names the heavens, unfold itself like a vast pavilion, your intelligence—before knowing what the word signifies—expects something magnificent; no mean object could have been named thus; it is better than an onomatopœia, although it is not one.' And then as to metaphors, we know that metaphors are the very substance of language, the wheels and wings by which language began to move and soar; but then, happily

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<sup>1</sup> 'Quinetiam verbis tam paucis et minime commixtis utuntur, ut plane ex linguâ ipsâ quis perspiciat, gentem fuisse illam Nazaream a reliquis gentibus separatam.'—Bacon, *De Augm. Scient.* vi.

for us, happily for our power of abstract thought, the sense of their *being* metaphors is not habitually present to us as a confusing influence when we use them. We speak of *humility* without any reference to *humus*, the ground ; of *caprice*, without recalling the friskings of a kid ; of *jovial*, with no connotation of Pagan deities or astrological planets ; of *influence*, without being reminded of the circle which ripples on a stream. But a Hebrew would have regarded these words (*apart from* their metaphorical origin) as mere 'arbitrary, opaque uninteresting conventionalisms.' He seemed ill at ease in realising a conception unless he could paint it in words confessedly and distinctly picturesque ; it was no mere poetical ornament with him when he described a bullock to add that it had horns and hoofs ; patience with him was a long sigh, impatience a quick gasp ; or patience was length of nose, and irritability was shortness of nose : pardon was expressed by covering, hiding, effacing. In the Book of Job, says Renan, God puts sins in a sack, seals it, and flings it behind his back—all which means to forget. People not only speak, but open their mouths and speak ; not only answer, but answer and say ; not only get angry, but their visage is inflamed ; not only sorrowful, but their visage falls ;<sup>1</sup> do not merely go back, but rise up and return to the place whence they came forth ; and the widow of Tekoah is not only a widow, but thinks it necessary to tell David that she is 'a widow woman and her husband is dead.' When, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Pistol uses the expression 'He hears with ears,' Sir Hugh Evans indignantly exclaims, 'The tevil and his tam ! What phrase is this, "He hears with ear" ? Why, it is affectations.' But, in point of fact, so far from being 'affectations,' it marks the pictorial redundancy of the earliest stages of language. The Semitic languages are in a much more *primitive* state than the Aryan, and all these peculi-

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Ex. xxxii. 15 : 'The tables were written *on both their sides* ; *on the one side* and *on the other* were they written.'

arities might be amply illustrated from other undeveloped languages. To give but one instance—the King of Bokhara informed Dr. Wolff that he had put to death poor Lieut. Connolly because ‘he had had a long nose,’ by which he simply meant in an expressive manner to imply that he was irritable or proud. Such metaphors and pleonasms arise from an instinctive desire to make everything even superfluously clear to the dimmest imagination and the least developed intelligence. The mighty line of Dante has often been admired, in which he tells us how in his anguish ‘he fell as a dead body falls ;’<sup>1</sup> yet how much less impressive is it than the solemnly intense pathos of that leisurely expression in the Book of Samuel, which tells us how the discrowned king in the witch’s cave, his blood suddenly curdled by their prophecy of doom, ‘fell straightway all along on the earth’—or, as the margin expresses it, ‘*made haste and fell with the fulness of his stature.*’

As a natural consequence of the characteristics I have described, the Hebrew language is indeed adapted to the most splendid and Sibylline utterances of prophecy and poetry—being what Milton in one of his pregnant utterances said that all poetry ought to be, ‘simple, sensuous, passionate’—but in *prose* can hardly be said to admit the possibility of a style. I have already incidentally mentioned that Hebrew abounds in plays on words—like ‘thohoo vabhohoo,’ ‘formless and void,’ in the very second verse of Genesis—which in Aryan languages are almost confined to poetry, and *there* as a rare and questionable prettiness ; but in Arabic, even at the culminating point of their literary activity, all the style there is consists of this and nothing else ; the very ornament and imagery which the Arab regards as the jewels of the Koran are exactly those which we

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<sup>1</sup> Mentre che l' uno spirto questo disse,  
 L' altro piangeva sì, che di pietade  
 Io venni men così com' io morisse ;  
 E caddi, come corpo morto cade.—*Infern.* v. 142.

should regard as childish and fantastic. Here, for instance, is a passage on Death imitated from the sermon of an Arab preacher :—‘When the sad hour shall *arrive*, what pious work will *survive*? When in the tomb you shall *repose*, what will you *oppose* to the questions that He then will *propose*? When God shall *plead*, who will *aid*?’ &c.<sup>1</sup> This is all very well for proverbs and nursery rhymes, but imagine an entire history, like that, for instance, of Timour by Ibn-Arabscha, written partly with those perpetual assonances, and partly with a gorgeous luxury of imaginative ornament, and you will see that in a Semitic language a Thucydides or a Froude were as little possible as an Aristotle or a Kant.

Yet while we dwell on these intellectual deficiencies, while we admit that there was in the Semite but little of that science,<sup>2</sup> or philosophy, or courageous love of truth which are the glory of the Aryan,—while we acknowledge him to have been utterly deficient in the spirit of liberty which solved the problem of rendering individual development compatible with imperial and military organisation,—while we point out the one-sidedness of his intellect, the sameness of his passions, the monotony of his history, the uniformity of his literature, the deficiency in him of the social instincts and of large humanitarian conceptions, the religious absorption which deadened in him all interest for science,<sup>3</sup> and the iconoclastic zeal which destroyed for him the possibility

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<sup>1</sup> S. Munk, *Cours de langues hébraïques, Leç. d'ouvert.* 1865.

<sup>2</sup> We talk of Arabic science, and think of Avicenna and Averroes, &c. But the so-called science of the Arabs in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was merely a second-hand reflection of Greek thoughts, often both mistranslated and misexplained, to which, after all, the Arabic mind formed a very distorting medium: and the greatest names of the so-called Arabic philosophy are not the names of Semites at all, but of Persians and Spaniards writing in Arabic. A page of Roger Bacon contains, says M. Renan, more of the true spirit of science than all the traditional and second-hand science of a nation which found far truer expression in Ecclesiastes than in Aristotle.—*Disc. d'ouvert.* p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Job xxxvi. 25, 26; Eccles. i. 17, 18; xii. 12.

of art — let us never forget the truly immeasurable work which he effected for the world. The very intensity and subjectivity of his religious conceptions were his *weakness* no less than his strength. They were his weakness, because a noble and fertile spirit of inquiry is impossible for one whose capacity of wonder is swallowed up in his awe for the Infinite and the Unseen, for whom every event is Kismet or Destiny—whose sufficient expression of astonishment is, ‘Allah is great,’ and whose ready solution of every inquiry is, ‘Allah knows.’<sup>1</sup> No philosophic conception of great demiurgic laws, and no modification or adaptation of those laws to human purposes, was possible to a nation which regarded everything as the direct, immediate, unconditioned exercise of divine power, either by God himself, or by individual angels or demons who stood ready to effect his purpose. ‘When a bull is angry the devil leaps up between his horns,’ wrote one of the Rabbis, and the same conception of miraculous intervention and personal agencies exhausts their entire philosophy of the universe, and the events which take place in it. Mr. Newman has somewhere said that the result of what is called Evangelical teaching upon his mind, was to intensify in him the conviction that the only two realities—the only two entities whose existence he could entirely realise—were himself and God. No expression could be chosen which more accurately describes the natural feelings of a Hebrew, or which could more simply indicate the tendency of his literature. Yet, as a direct consequence of this, although the Hebrew is the only member of his race who has handed down to posterity a permanent literature, and although his race has been intrusted with but one memorable work for mankind, yet

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<sup>1</sup> L’islam est le dédain de la science, la suppression de la société civile ; c’est l’épouvantable simplicité de l’esprit sémitique, rétrécissant le cerveau humain, le fermant à toute idée délicate, à tout sentiment fin, à toute recherche rationnelle, pour le mettre en face d’une éternelle tautologie : *Dieu est Dieu.* — Renan, *Disc. de l’ouvert. au Coll. de France*, p. 28.



that literature is of absolutely priceless value, and that work is the most infinite of all in its bearings, for the literature is the Bible, and the work is the dissemination of a belief in the ONE TRUE GOD. If there be a meagre sterility in the Hebrew's words, there is an infinitude in their power. If he evoked his awful music from a monochord, it was yet a sublimer chord, and one of more mysterious efficacy, than any of those whose blended music was heard in the seven-stringed harp which the Aryan played. The very subjectivity of his emotions, the introspective egotism of his whole spiritual constitution, led him in his deep meditations to educate for ever the conscience of mankind, and drove him forth at one period with fanatic proselytism, to spread among races, in all other respects his superiors, his sublime faith in the Unity of God.<sup>1</sup> Free from the enormous confusions and complications of unaided Aryan thought, there have been but three religions which looked upward consciously and solely to the one true God. Those three religions were Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and those three religions (which are at this moment wellnigh the sole religions of the civilised world) sprang from three Semitic centres, which are separated from each other but by a few days' journey. The Hebraic Semite was, what he so intensely felt himself to be, a member of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. 'Greece,' says Thomas de Quincey, 'was, in fact, too ebullient with intellectual activity—an activity too palæstric and purely human—so that the opposite pole of the mind, which points to the mysterious and the spiritual, was, in the agile Greek—too intensely a child of the earth—starved and palsied; while in the Hebrew, dull and inert

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<sup>1</sup> 'La marche de l'humanité se fait par la lutte des tendances contraires, par une sorte de polarisation en vertu de laquelle chaque idée a ici-bas ses représentants exclusifs. C'est dans l'ensemble que s'harmonisent toutes les contradictions, et que la paix suprême résulte du choc des éléments en apparence ennemis.'—Renan, *Disc. d'ouvert.* au Collège de France, p. 14.

intellectually, but in his spiritual organs awake and sublime, the case was entirely reversed. Yet, after all, the result was immeasurably in favour of the Hebrew. Speaking in the deep sincerities of the solitary and musing heart, which refuses to be duped by the mere whistling of names, the Greek *laudatur et alget*—he has won the admiration of the human race, he is numbered among the chief brilliancies of earth, but on the deeper and more abiding nature of man he has no hold. He will perish when any deluge of calamity overtakes the libraries of our planet, or if any great revolution of thought remoulds them, and will be remembered only as a generation of flowers is remembered, with the same tenderness of feeling, and with the same pathetic sense of natural predestination to evanescence. . . . Whereas the Hebrew, by introducing himself to the secret places of the human heart, and sitting there as incubator over the awful germs of the spiritualities that connect man with the unseen worlds, has perpetuated himself as a power in the human system : he is coenduring with man's race, and careless of all revolutions in literature or in the composition of society.' The Aryans believed in the secular Avatar of their gods ; far more real, far more enduring in its effects over the remotest generations, was the Avatar of Hebrew Prophecy.

Nor must we forget the extreme probability of our having owed to the Semitic race another most memorable gift—the gift of an alphabet, the gift of those ingenious symbols which can alone give perpetuity and unlimited extension to human utterances. The modern alphabets of all civilised nations have come from Greek, and the Greeks themselves admitted that they had borrowed their alphabet from the Phœnicians. Cadmus, the name of the mythic introducer of writing into Greece, was represented as a Phœnician, and, in fact, his very name is but a Hebrew word, meaning either 'the ancient' or 'the East.'<sup>1</sup> I will not here digress into

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<sup>1</sup> קדם to which the Greeks have merely affixed the termination of the

the interesting question as to the origin of writing, or as to the honour of its invention ; but even if the Egyptians are entitled to the credit of the conception by virtue of the hieratic and demotic developments of their hieroglyphic system, the Phœnicians were certainly among the earliest to perfect it, and the sole nation who made it widely known. Their own literature has entirely perished, but they bequeathed to us an inheritance by which alone all other literature would be either possible or permanent. Nor is that all ; for to the same remarkable people we owe some of the earliest enterprises of colonisation, and their adventurous barks, engaged in an active commerce, had carried them as far north as the British Isles, and as far west as the Sargasso Sea. Now, if the Phœnicians were indeed pure Semites, they form a most singular exception to the general peculiarities of their race. Little of what we have said respecting the Semitic race in general, applies to them. Unlike their national kindred, the Phœnicians were energetic, they were enterprising, they were artistic, they were grossly immoral, they were freely polytheistic. In short, they were almost everything which the other Semites were not, and scarcely anything that the other Semites were. If they were a pure race, they would go far (as do the Mexicans in America) to shake to its very foundations the conception of ineradicable race-distinctions which have long prevailed among so many ethnologists. The arguments against their being Semites is in part derived from the fact that the tenth chapter of Genesis classes them among the children of Ham. The supposition that this was a calumny of national hatred is, says Professor Munk, 'a very convenient style of criticism, which emanates rather from a certain coquetry of scepticism, than from any desire to seek and know the truth.' But in

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nominative. But for these 'Cadmi nigellæ filiæ,' as Ausonius calls the Greek alphabet, we might still have been floundering in hieroglyphics. קדמ is 'East,' in Gen. iii. 24 ; 'ancient' in Deut. xxxiii. 15 ; 2 Kings xix. 25 ; 'Cadmus' was the personification of the East, as 'Europa' of the West.

spite of this severe *dictum*, it must be admitted that, whatever may be the difficulties in the way of believing the Phœnicians to have been Semites, the difficulties on the other side are far more overwhelming. Professor Munk indeed, accepting a tradition of Herodotus, believes that the Phœnicians were an immigrating, victorious Hamitic race, who adopted the Semitic dialect of the Rephaim and other aborigines whom they conquered, and he thinks that Hamitic *débris*<sup>1</sup> can still be discovered in the few monuments of their language. But can anything be more supremely improbable than the suggestion that such a people as the Phœnicians should have adopted their language from the defeated remnant of a race so brutal as the Palestinian aborigines—a race which, we may remark in passing, are not *certainly* known to have been Semites at all. One thing, however, is admitted on all hands, and that is that the Phœnician language, even if it had some slight extraneous admixtures, was not only Semitic, but bore the closest possible resemblance to the Hebrew. The names of their two chief towns, Tyre and Sidon, are both Hebrew, the former meaning ‘rock,’ the latter ‘fishery.’ The relics of their language on coins and inscriptions are very few, the most important being the inscription on the tomb of Eschmoun-Ezer, King of Sidon, which is now in the Louvre, and the Phœnician inscription of Marseilles. But, on the other hand, we have several fragments of the language of the Carthaginians, who were their direct colonists, Dido, the legendary founder of Carthage, being, in all probability, a contemporary of the Phœnician princess Jezebel. We know that Carthage itself means in Hebrew, ‘Newtown;’ that Byrsa, its citadel, is the Hebrew *bozra*, a fortress; that *bal* in such names as Hasdrubal and Hannibal is simply Baal; that Barca, the family name of Hannibal, is the same

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<sup>1</sup> He instances the pronoun *anokhi*, ‘I,’ found in no other Semitic language, except the Hebrew אֲנִי, אֲנִי. It is also found in Egyptian, v. Gesen. *Thes.* i. 126, s. v.

as barak, 'lightning ;' that 'suffetes,' which Livy tells us was the name of the Carthaginian magistrates, is the Hebrew 'shophetim,' or judges ; that Lilybæum, the name they gave to the western angle of Sicily, means 'towards Libya,' *li* being simply the Hebrew preposition. Finally, not to dwell on other proofs, Plautus wrote a play called *Pænulus*, 'the Little Carthaginian,' and in that play a Punic scene is introduced, which, so far as it has been yet deciphered, is most distinctly Hebraic in its character. St. Augustine, who was himself a Carthaginian, says that Hebrew and Carthaginian differed but little. Since, then, the Phœnicians spoke a Semitic language, we must almost necessarily conclude that they were themselves partially Semites. Perhaps the true solution of the difficulties which meet us in finding them possessed of a civilisation wholly unlike that of the other people who spoke their language, lies in the fact indicated in the Book of Genesis by the fraternal relation of Ham to Shem : perhaps, in fact, we may assume that there was at an early period a close intercourse and rapid interchange of relations between the descendants of Ham and those of Shem, and that, in consequence of this intercourse, the Hamites sometimes adopted the *language* of the Semites, while they retained tendencies and institutions of a wholly different character.

The relations between the Aryan and the Semitic race have been almost entirely hostile, from the day when Alexander conquered Phœnicia and subjugated Judæa, down to the other day when Lord Napier of Magdala crushed in a single campaign the power of Abyssinia. The Aryan race has almost invariably triumphed in the contest. The Semites were indeed victorious when Judas Maccabeus broke the yoke of Antiochus Epiphanes ; and when Hannibal shattered the Roman armies at Cannæ and Thrasimene ; and when the Jews defeated Cestius at Beth-horon ; and when at Kadesia the general of Omar won the standard of Persia ;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stiff as it was with jewels, it was the apron of the patriotic blacksmith Gavah.

and when, again, advancing by Gibraltar, which still bears his name, the Moorish chieftain Tarik<sup>1</sup> scattered at Xeres the forces of Roderic. But, on the other hand, the Semites were utterly routed by Scipio at Zama, and by Titus when the Roman eagles gathered round the dying carcass of Judea; and when, in the reign of Adrian, 580,000 followers of the false Messiah, Barchochebas, fell by fire, famine, and the sword; and when, in 732 A.D., in seven days of battle and massacre on the plains of Tours, Charles Martel gave that final and decisive rout to their forces, but for which, as Gibbon observes, 'perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet.' Since that day the entire fortunes and destinies of the Semitic race have declined. The glories of Islam, the direct result of their religious enthusiasm, were but the dying flash in the embers of its vitality. The memorials of its splendour are recorded in undecipherable inscriptions in the desert or on mountain rocks, or lie buried amid the ruins of Palestine, the fisher-tents of Sidon, the broken columns of Carthage, and the mounds of Kouyunjik; nor does there live for it any hope of future history save in the cherished and sacred convictions of a scattered people that 'the Lord will yet build up Jerusalem, and gather together the outcasts of Judah.'

But still this race did not begin to decline and disappear from the field of history until its work was done. 'Humanity may advance solely over the wrecks of past ages and the ruins of former people, but it advances still.' Tribes and nations disappear, but it is only to make way for others who have higher problems still to solve. The character of the Semitic race has always been its 'inveterate isolation.' Even in the days of their dawning glory the Semites did but occupy a small parallelogram of Asia, about 1,600

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<sup>1</sup> Djebel al Tarik.

miles long, and 800 broad, chiefly in its two western peninsulas, and not more than one-thirteenth part of its whole extent. They have rarely left these narrow boundaries. Their colonies were few, and in few instances have they been permanent; their conquests were only due to a tumultuous and vivid fanaticism, and in no instance have they left very abiding traces. Not to Shem, the ancestor of the Jews, but to Japheth, the ancestor of the Aryans, was given the prophecy of enlargement, and in all ages Japheth has dwelt in the tents of Shem. If it was written in the books of destiny that the sons of Ham were to be slaves, and the sons of Shem to be prophets, it was written also that the sons of Japheth were to be kings.

And yet, before the children of Arabia had forgotten the example of that fiery valour which inspired Khaled, 'the sword of God,' they had carried their victorious religion through the fairest regions of the globe, and so rescued them from the worst curses of a degraded Polytheism. Before Judaism disappeared there had been intrusted to men born in her traditions that divine revelation which was destined to regenerate the world. The Semite has sunk indeed into decrepitude, but not until he had left to the Aryan the inheritance of his best wealth. The Aryan, more objective in his conceptions, less concentrated in his personality, did not learn unaided to disentangle his religious conceptions from his natural impressions—

The traveller slaked  
His thirst from fount and gushing rill, and thanked  
The Naiad. Sunbeams upon distant hills  
Gliding apace with shadows in their train  
Might with small help from fancy be transformed  
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.  
The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings,  
Lack'd not for love fair objects whom they wooed  
With gentle whisper.

In short, the religion of the Aryan was but a personification of external influences, and his mythology a metaphorical description of the ravages of night and winter, the freshness

of the dewdrops, or the glory of the dawn. The Semite, more subjective, more individual, taught him to separate himself more clearly from the Universe, to gain a loftier conception of the Deity, to look through Nature up to Nature's God. The knowledge of One God was the living oracle of Semitism ; an oracle which it preserved, but was at once powerless and unwilling to communicate to the world. It received, it treasured ;—to disseminate was beyond its power. But when God revealed himself in his Son, the revelation was no longer destined for a separate nation. When the Semitic race bequeathed its sceptre to the Gentile world, it bequeathed with that sceptre the heritage of a new religion. And it was this new religion which enkindled the force and genius of the hitherto dormant members of the Aryan Family. This it was which flushed with fresh vigour the veins of the dying Roman Empire. This it was that raised the Teutons from a race of lazy barbarians into leaders in the world's intellectual advance. This it was that transformed the cruel and frantic Viking into the chivalrous and noble Norman. This it was which even now is daily lifting the Slavonian from polygamy, isolation, and serfdom. This it was that gave all which is noblest and most distinctive to the names of France, and England, and Italy, and Spain. Yes ; the Aryan has well learnt the deepest lesson which the Semite had to teach, and with that lesson it seems the clear destiny of Providence that he should advance farther and farther to the civilisation, the enlightenment, in one word, the evangelisation of the whole habitable globe.

Let me, before I conclude this Lecture, once more very briefly recapitulate some of the leading historical conclusions and thoughts which are the recent gift of the Science of Philology to the knowledge and the purposes of mankind.

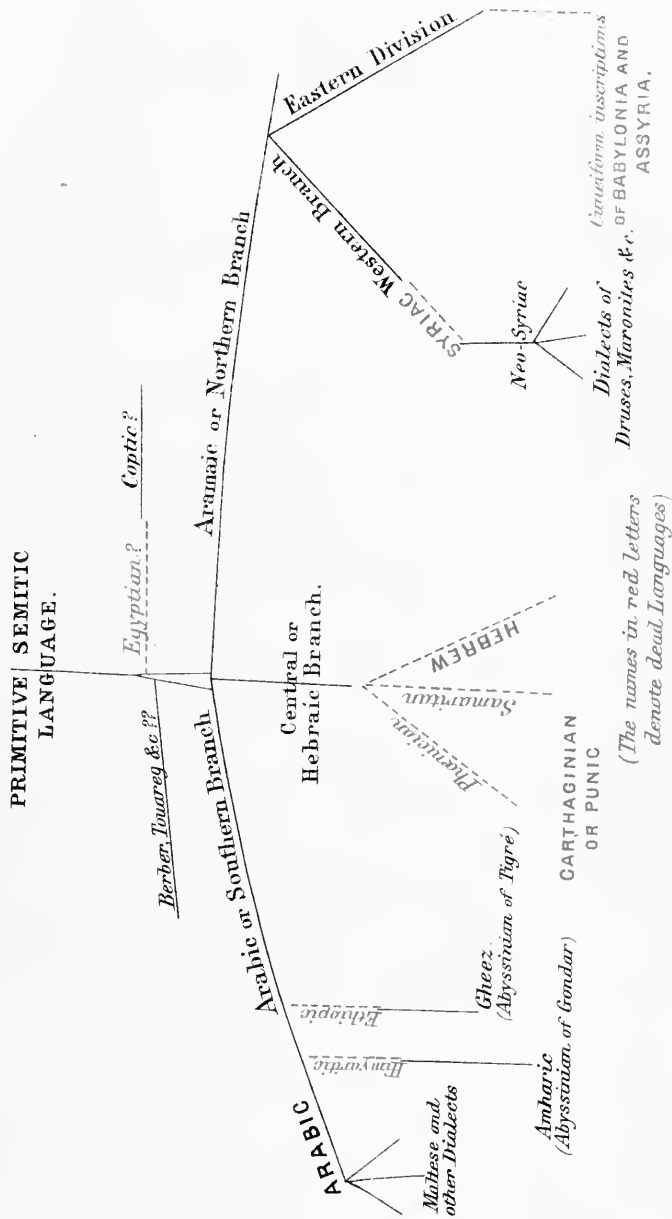
Not far from each other — the one in the regions of Armenia, the other along the great Oxus valley—appeared in the dimmest dawn of commencing human development two races, fairer in complexion, stronger and more beauti-



fully organised in physical constitution, and with spirits incomparably more finely touched to fine issues than any other races which the world had to that time seen. At periods varying from 3,000 to 2,000 years before our era, a vast division took place in the Aryan race, and whole tribes, destined hereafter to be the fathers of mighty nations, streamed away victoriously in successive waves, first towards the north and west, and later towards the east and south. They became subjected to different laws,—the western tribes advancing farthest in material and intellectual prosperity, the eastern feeding themselves on profounder conceptions in the midst of a remarkable simplicity of life. Meanwhile, at about the same period, the other great race also began to move in immense migrations. In the person of Eber it entered Mesopotamia; in the person of Joktan it entered Arabia; in the person of Abraham it entered Palestine. Indifferent, except in those branches of it which were half Hamitic, to the great arts of war and peace, to this race was it mainly given to keep alive the revelation of the Unity of God and the eternal majesty of the moral law. After a long history, somewhat monotonous, and but rarely triumphant, there arose in the bosom of this race a new and diviner revelation which it rejected, but in the very act of rejecting imparted to the western descendants of its sister-race, and then sank gradually, but with one reviving and reactionary effort, into contented subordination. In the hands of this western race the Holy Fire began to burn brighter and yet more bright, and in their great commercial and military progress they reached their long-forgotten and then unrecognised brothers of the east. In the hands of these eastern brothers they saw, as it were, the *crepundia*—the family tokens—which had remained almost intact in their possession, and which once had lain in the common cradle. But before those *crepundia* were recognised there was many a fierce struggle, many a blood-stained battle-field between these brothers, who saw in each other only aliens. After a separation of 4,000 years, after having traversed an immense

circle of the globe, the younger Aryan returns, not solely to *rule* over the elder, not only to rekindle his torch at the sacred flame which had once glowed on the ancestral hearth, but to teach him,—in requital it may be for many injuries,—the lessons of a superior wisdom, a purer justice, and a loftier morality,—above all, to teach him that body of sacred truth which was long the special glory and amulet of the Hebraic Semite, but which when once it had been imparted to the Indo-European family, was fostered by Grecian genius, and supported by Roman power, and deepened by Germanic thought, and illustrated by Italian art, and disseminated by the energy and empire of England, and should now be inscribed upon the common labarum, which a race,—formed indeed of separate nationalities, but animated by a sublime unanimity of purpose,—should regard it as their highest object, and their providential mission, to render visible and glorious through a redeemed and regenerated world.

# TABLE OF THE SEMITIC OR SYRO-ARABIAN LANGUAGES.





## LECTURE IV.

IN the previous Lectures, after briefly describing the steps which led to the great discovery of Comparative Philology, I have endeavoured to set before you a few of its most remarkable results, and to call your attention to the progress of the religious ideas of the Semite, and the arms and civilisation of the Aryan, across the world. In doing this I wished to sum up the chief historical conclusions to which the Science of Language has hitherto attained ; but it is probable that discoveries no less startling, and inferences even more important, may await her in the vast field to which I now invite your attention, a field so vast that it might well occupy a series of many Lectures, and to which it is utterly impossible to do justice in the hour which alone remains to me of my present course.

You will see it stated in many modern treatises that the languages of the world may be divided into *three* great Families—the Semitic, the Aryan, and the Turanian. Now, unless the word Family be used in two entirely different senses, I must at the very outset protest against any such classification as illusory and unscientific. The Aryan is a family ; the Semitic is a family ; the so-called Turanian, unless it be confined within very narrow limits, is in *no* sense of the word a family, but a vast seething mass of human languages hitherto most imperfectly known, and most superficially compared together. These languages are spoken by tribes and nations which have no ethnographical affinities, and many of them differ from each other as completely and fundamentally as it is possible for languages to

do.<sup>1</sup> To speak of them as forming a *family* is to force a number of gratuitous hypotheses into the shadowy semblance of a scientific generalisation. And the very name Turanian is altogether unfortunate, for at the best it has a mere geographical significance, and can only be correctly applied to the natives of Turkestan. It is simply unwarrantable, as Professor Pott demonstrated fourteen years ago,<sup>2</sup> to open it 'like a great convenient bag' and fling promiscuously into it languages so radically diverse as Basque, Malay, Polynesian, American, African, Australasian, with Chinese underlying them all as an 'inorganic' Turanian structure. In fact, so much has this unfortunate word been abused, so completely have English and American writers made it a sort of hypothetical sand-rope to tie together languages absolutely alien to each other, that the original inventor of the word, the venerable Omalius d'Halloy, in the last edition of his *Éléments d'Ethnographie*, deliberately abandoned it for the name *Alatyan*, a name applied to themselves by the Tatars of Siberia. He says that the name *Tatar* should be banished from Ethnology, because under it are confused together people of two great races, the white and the yellow; consequently in 1840 he adopted instead the name *Turanian*; but in 1859, regretting the wholly undue extension which had been given to the term, and finding from M. Levchine's travels among the Khirgiz-Kazaks, that the Tatars of Siberia call themselves

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<sup>1</sup> I have already touched on this subject in a paper read before the Ethnological Society (*Mag.* 1865), and printed in their *Transactions*. No doubt the dissemination and (as I hold) misapplication of the name Turanian is due in a great measure to Bunsen, whose glowing human sympathies were delighted by what seemed to him a splendid and well-established generalisation. Professor Max Müller, although he holds what may be called the Turanian theory, has always written of it, and especially in all his later works, with conspicuous caution and moderation; he has even checked the unscientific zeal of philologists who were too hasty in adducing arguments in its favour. See *Stratification of Language*, pp. 42, 43.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Deutsch. morgenl. Zeitsch.* ix. 417.

Alatys, he deliberately adopted this name and excluded the other.<sup>1</sup>

Great as is the discovery that languages mutually unintelligible may yet be rigorously proved to be connected, by the close similarity of their grammatical structure and the rigid identity of their roots, it is a discovery which will lose half its value if it be hastily and impetuously applied to languages wholly distinct from each other. It is far too early in the day to talk of the ‘Turanian Unity,’ unless we limit the expression to the linguistic family which in the accompanying table is called Alatian. The preconceived opinion as to the feasibility of giving to the term an immense extension has hitherto been only supported, and that very inadequately, by a few dubious and possibly accidental resemblances of roots, and by that vague similarity of linguistic appliances which must result from the fact that men everywhere have similar organs of expression, and some analogy in their mental processes. And be it observed, that in classifying the Aryan and Semitic families, we have, strictly speaking, merely classified languages spoken on what may be called four peninsulas<sup>2</sup>—viz. Europe, Asia Minor, Arabia, and Hindostan; but how vast is the number of living languages, from the Liakhov Islands to Otaheite, and from Alaska to Papua—how vast the number of dead languages from those displaced by Roman conquests to those of North America, of which in Humboldt’s time a few aged parrots were the sole surviving speakers,<sup>3</sup>—which yet remain, and probably for ever will remain, unexamined and unclassified. And how unphilosophical and rash prematurely to throw together, as even hypothetically of a common origin, such languages as the severely-monosyllabic Chinese

<sup>1</sup> Omalius d’Halloy, *Élém. d’Ethnographie*, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> See Max Müller in Bunsen, *Outlines of the Philosophy of History*, ii. 6–9.

<sup>3</sup> ‘M. A. de Humboldt rencontra à Mapuyrès un vieux perroquet dont personne ne pouvait comprendre le langage.’—A. Maury, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 avr. 1857.

with languages which, like Tlatskanai, have words of a dozen or twenty syllables long for the simplest material objects;—or such languages as that of the Puri-Indians, which have no words for yesterday or to-morrow, and cannot get beyond the number three, with languages like Japanese, which, we are told, possesses separate and specific numerals to express the numbers of ships, of birds; of men, of animals, of long objects, of flat objects, of hats, of umbrellas, of parasols, of inanimate objects with four legs, of sealed letters, of patent letters, and so on up to 100,000 !<sup>1</sup> It is surely time that the wholly fictitious Tur, a venerable personage<sup>2</sup> (as M. Broca says), ‘forgotten by Moses and unknown to Noah,’ should take his place side by side with Brute the Trojan, or Francus, grandson of Hector, or Prester John; and that the Turanians should confine themselves henceforth permanently to the wilds of their native Turkestan. If any words be wanted to describe the (perhaps a thousand) languages which are not Aryan, and not Semitic, and which have not yet been grouped together by mutual affinities, there are two excellent, easy, and perfectly unobjectionable terms at hand, and we may honestly confess our total ignorance as to any real principle of unity pervading them, by calling them Sporadic, i.e. scattered; or Allophylian, i.e. spoken by other different tribes of the human family.

Now, there have been, but I do not suppose there still are, some Aryan scholars, Sanskritists and classical philologists—who would treat these barbarous and semi-civilised languages with nearly as lordly a contempt as was shown by the Greeks for every language but their own. And partly in consequence of this it has constantly happened that Englishmen have been located in the midst of languages of the deepest interest, and which are rapidly becoming extinct, and have not taken the slightest trouble to preserve even a faint trace of their vocabulary or grammar. Fortunately,

<sup>1</sup> Crawford ‘On Numerals,’ *Ethnol. Trans.* 1863.

<sup>2</sup> ‘La Linguist. et l’Anthropol,’ *Bull. de la Soc. d’Anthropol.* 1862, p. 272 seq.



however, there have been others who have felt more of the spirit of the Roman dramatist, *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*, and who have rightly concluded that the very meanest human dialects spoken by the most squalid human tribes that ever existed on mussels, or on dead whales, or on the pupæ of the wood-ant, or on each other, —the languages muttered by the Inuit in his miserable igloo of snow, or the Bosjesman in the lair which he scrapes out of the sands of the parched karoo—are yet subjects of deep interest, and *may* even lead to more remarkable discoveries than the most polished language which ever enshrined an immortal literature. For it is these languages more than any others which are likely to throw a faint glimmer of light over what may be called ‘that *Eocene* period of the human mind which precedes the dawn of all history’ —for which, therefore, indispensable as it is for our ethnic and zoological, nay, even for our political and humanitarian speculations, all other lights are wanting. In fact the more bizarre the method of the language, the more impoverished are its resources, the more miserable the contrivances it adopts, the more nakedly it displays the crude infantile expedients of a primitive speech, the more forcible the contrast it presents to all the languages with which we are familiar, *the more entirely is it worthy of our philological examination*. For after all it is, and must necessarily be, an instrument, and an adequate instrument, for the expression of human needs, even if those needs are at their lowest; and a dim reflex of human intelligence, even if that intelligence be of the meanest and least developed type. In Language as in Nature there is an infinite power of adaptation and an infinite capacity for development. Take the loveliest and richest language which ever was, and it will be possible to analyse it into roots of the crudest character, and metaphors the most erroneous or vague. Just as the Roman satirist taunted his countrymen with the fact that, however far back they might trace their genealogy, their ultimate ancestor was either a shepherd or a thief, so we may say

of the lordliest language—we may say even of sacred Hebrew or of exquisite Greek—that its constituent elements are nothing better than onomatopœias and infant cries. Even numerals, abstract as they may seem, are derived from imitations and metaphor. Myriad is from the root *mur*, in *murmur*, implying the rush of water-drops. The Sanskrit for 100 crores of lacs of rupees is *jaladhi*, or ocean, and for ten billions is *padma*, a lotus, or *sanku*, an anthill. Take such a word as ‘mystery,’ beyond which in its highest meanings language cannot go, yet what is it etymologically but an extension of the syllables *mu*, *mum*, an onomatopœia from the closing of the lips? What is ‘mother’ but a lengthening of the first crooning of childish labials? What is ‘heaven’ but the space heaved over us, or ‘hell’ but a hole beneath our feet? Languages very crude and sensuous in their character have but remained at a stage in which *all* language must once have been. All that the Hebrew uttered by the majestic and sonorous economy of his strange triliteral roots,—all that the Greek eternised in the rich, musical, synthetic forms of his delicately modulated expression,—all that the Italian conveys in the ‘vowelled undersong’ of his liquid utterance, the Hottentot is no less able, under *some* form or other, to interpret into his dissonant clicks, and the aborigines of Malacca by their bird-like whistlings, and the Chinese by his monosyllabic interjections, and the Eskimo or the Cherokee by his guttural and immeasurable polysyllables. I hardly hesitate to prophesy the extreme probability that the final answer to many high scientific problems respecting the nature and origin of man may come from inquiries into the languages of nations such as these, rather than from any other branch of physiological or palæontological research. In examining the idea and structure of a plant a botanist is far more likely to understand it by choosing its wild and original representative, than by culling a specimen from the garden or the conservatory. Now cultivated<sup>1</sup> and literary languages are

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<sup>1</sup> Schleicher, *Die Deutsch. Spr.* 9.

like hothouse plants, modified and distorted by hundreds of years of care and cultivation ; and savage languages are like their most starved, isolated, and neglected congeners, which, however inferior, are yet most likely to give us a comprehension of the unaltered and normal organism.

Fortunately, then, as I have said, there have been scholars, who with nothing to tempt them but the love of truth, have turned aside from the Hesperian gardens of Aryan philology into the apparently barren fields of Allophylian research. Klaproth and Schott and Von der Gabelentz are all honourably known for their Allophylian labours. The great work of Boethlingk on the Jakutish language may almost rank with Bopp's Comparative Grammar. The recent vocabulary of the non-Aryan dialects of India has brought deserved credit to the distinguished author of the *Rural Annals of Bengal*, and will most certainly redound to the interest, the usefulness, and stability of our Indian dominions. But in this field the highest honour belongs to Rask and Castrén. Rasmus Christian Rask, a young Dane, in his zeal to understand something of this branch of philology, made himself master of no less than twenty-five languages and dialects, endured alike 'the biting frost of Iceland and the scorching suns of India,' travelled overland from Russia to Persia, and lived with equal contentment among the ruins of Persepolis and in the tents of the swarthy Finns. Alexander Castrén, who deserved if any man has ever deserved the splendid tribute of such a record as Browning's 'Grammarian's Funeral,' began, as Professor Müller observes, a new era in these studies, when, 'though in delicate health, he left his study, travelled for years alone in his sledge through the snowy deserts of Siberia, coasted along the borders of the Polar Sea, lived for whole winters in caves of ice or in the smoky huts of greasy Samoieds, then braved the sand-clouds of Mongolia, passed the Baikal, and returned from the frontiers of China to his duties as Professor at Helsingfors, to die after he had given to the world but a few specimens of his

treasures.' The united labours of such men were not infructuous, and the results of them were to demonstrate that there were well-marked affinities between the five languages of Northern Asia and Europe which you see mentioned in the table before you, on which I have substituted the name *Alatyan* for the objectionable though common *Turanian*. Nor is this the only liberty I have taken, for I have not thought it worth while for our present purpose to load the table with a number of obscure and unknown names, and have therefore in the final division recorded those only which were most important and familiar. I wish also to add the very strong warning founded on the frank admission of those who are best acquainted with the facts, that the evidence on which the affinity of this band of northern languages is admitted, though it may be considered to rest on sufficient foundation, is yet of a wholly different and wholly inferior character to that which has established the unity and mutual affinities of different families of the *Aryan* or *Semitic* race.

All that has really been done at present in the classification of these *Sporadic* languages is the establishment of certain large groups into which they may be separated. One of these is the *Alatyan*, of which I have just spoken. Another is the *Malayo-Polynesian*; another is the *Polysynthetic*, a word describing the class of languages spoken, with scarcely an exception, over a space of 120 degrees of latitude, from *Greenland* to *Cape Horn*. Another is the *Monosyllabic*, or *Chinese*; another, the *Transgangetic*. Another, the *Bantu*, or languages of *Southern Africa*, in which *Dr. Bleek* has been the chief worker; and another, which has been called the *Tamulic*, among the numerous aboriginal tribes of *India*. But all these are isolated and unconnected groups, having between each other no demonstrable affinity except a certain supposed general structure, to which has been given the conveniently elastic name of *Agglutination*. To this I shall return further on; but I must first pause to ask who the people *are* who speak

these groups of languages, which rise like isolated mountain-peaks out of broad primeval seas of impenetrable mist.

Excluding for the present the Chinese, Egyptians, Peruvians, Mexicans, and in modern times such nations as the Finns, Magyars, and Turks, we may say generally that a large number of them belong to the lowest, palæozoic strata of humanity. They were the people whom the Aryan and the Semite overcame in internecine warfare, and oppressed with inextinguishable hate ; peoples whom no nation acknowledges as its kinsmen ; whose languages, rich in words for all that can be eaten or handled, seem absolutely incapable of expressing the reflex conceptions of the intellect, or the higher forms of the consciousness ; whose life seems confined to a gratification of animal wants, with no hope in the future and no pride in the past. They are for the most part peoples without a literature and without a history, and many of them apparently as imperfectible as the Ainos of Jesso or the Veddahs of Ceylon ; peoples whose tongues in some instances have twenty names for murder, but no name for love, no name for gratitude, no name for God.<sup>1</sup> Every civilised nation has found them, and even savage nations have traditions or relics of yet more savage predecessors.

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<sup>1</sup> It is well known that in one African language, when the translators of the Bible were seeking a word for God, the only thing like it they could find was a word *Tixo* meaning 'Crooked-knee,' which had been the nickname of a great medicine-man of a generation before. Another anecdote will perhaps give some impression of these languages. I was told by a distinguished prelate of the English Church that when a translation of the Bible was first attempted into a certain Kafir language, the missionaries being anxious to find a word for love (in the text 'God is love'), endeavoured to get at such a word from inquiry among the natives. They got a word and rendered the verse, but there is something almost tragically sad in the fact which was afterwards discovered, that this word which they had used simply meant *meat in an advanced stage of decomposition*. Being asked for something which would express that which they most liked and longed for, this was the nearest analogon to such a conception which the natives could find, and this was the word which they had innocently furnished, and which had in equal innocence been adopted.

The Keits, the New Zealanders, the North American Indians, all knew, or believed, that they had ousted a race of previous inhabitants; and even among the immemorial Chinese there yet linger, in Formosa, and Hainan, and among the hills, the relics of an aboriginal population whom they call by the significant name of Miautszee, or *children of the soil*. And indeed these races once covered the soil like the primeval forests which served by their deciduous leaves to prepare the earth for a later and richer growth. The Egyptians spoke of the *Néxues*, or Dead-ones, who had preceded them; the Canaanites called them Rephaim, a name which the Hebrews adopted as their word for ghosts. In the thirtieth chapter of Job you will find an almost savage description of one such Troglodyte race, and their life described as a dark, solitary, squalid subsistence on roots and mallows in the desolate wilderness, 'whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock, who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper-roots for their meat. They were driven forth from among men, among the bushes they brayed, under the nettles they were gathered together.' It reads like the description of a Yakkah or a Yamparico; but of course these aboriginal populations were not *all* so low as this. It is hard to believe that the Esthoni-ans, and Finns, and Lapps, who once covered all Russia, were a particularly degraded race. That they were long occupiers is touchingly proved by the fact that they have left hundreds of names upon the map. In the vast Slavonic area there is scarcely a name which ends in *ga*, *va*, *ma*—all such names, from the Lena to the Dvina, as Moskva, Mordva, Onega, Ladoga, Narva,—which does not testify that the land once belonged to a swarthy, dwarfish, and now despised and dwindling race, whose language, nevertheless, is not only soft and musical, but is to a very great extent inflectional and not agglutinative.<sup>1</sup> But the climax of

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<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that the Finnic, which is far the most developed of the Alatyan languages, is also the only one which has a literature of any importance. It possesses what so many of even the most advanced

hatred in describing these autochthonal peoples, with whom their early poems show that they had a long and terrible struggle, is found in the language of the Aryans of Hindostan. Among them the aborigines whom they dispossessed are called Locust-eaters, Hole-dwellers, Raw-eaters, Rejectors of Indra, Monkey-tribes, Snakes, black, noseless, faceless demons, of squat stature and inarticulate speech. In the Hindoo theatricals to this day Mr. Hunter informs us that they are introduced on the stage as the demon inhabitants of the lower regions, with human faces but serpent tails, and sometimes with broad hoods, which represent the expanded neck of the cobra di capello !<sup>1</sup>

But while at first the mind may almost seem to sink bewildered before the numberless multitudes of tribes like these—tribes which have contributed *nothing* to the progress or enlightenment of the human race—tribes which have succeeded others which seem if possible to have been even lower still, and which once covered such colossal spaces of the earth's surface in every stage of nomad unprogressiveness or squalid savagery—yet even here Philology has not resigned her task, and here also she has some of her highest lessons to teach, lessons which have been won in many a year of terrible hardship and perilous fatigue, by many an heroic missionary and intrepid pioneer. And so completely has the earth been traversed over its remotest regions, and pierced to its extremest solitudes, that it is probable that there is no mode of human speech of which, in some of its dialects, we do not now possess vocabularies and specimens. Now no absolute morphological<sup>2</sup> classification of the non-Aryo-Semitic languages is possible? no firm and definite

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nations lack—a national epic, the *Kalewala*. Any one desirous of reading this curious and not uninteresting poem may do so in the German version of Schiefner (St. Petersburg, 1852), or the French of Le Duc, 1845.

<sup>1</sup> Hunter's *Rural Bengal*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> By the morphology of a language we mean the general laws of its grammatical structure.

lines of demarcation can be drawn between the outlying members and debateable lands of the separate linguistic kingdoms. Sometimes a language which is placed under the Agglutinative might be reasonably challenged as belonging to the Isolating or the Polysynthetic classes. The remark of our eminent botanist, Robert Brown, that nature connects organic bodies '*reticulatim potius quam catenatim*'—netwise rather than by separate links—is no less true of languages. Still, we may, I think, safely assert that there are very few of these Allophylian languages which do not fall under the broad divisions of (i.) Isolating, i.e. monosyllabic and unsyntactical, (ii.) Agglutinating, or (iii.) Polysynthetic, terms which I shall explain and illustrate a little further on.<sup>1</sup> Very few of them, so far as we know, can be called inflectional, like the Aryan; nor do any of them systematically adopt the method of internal vowel-modification, like the Semitic, to express the various shades of meaning. In the short space which yet remains to me, I will try to give

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<sup>1</sup> I may, however, give an illustration at once. Thus, suppose you want to express causality. First, in an isolating language, the idea would be either left wholly unexpressed, as in Chinese, where e.g. *ta* means either 'to be great' or 'to make great,' or it would be expressed by mere repetition, as in Namaqua, where *lan* = 'to know,' and *lan lan* = 'to make know.' Secondly, in an agglutinating language, it would be expressed by loosely adding (after the fashion of a printer's-hyphen compound) some separate verb, as in Magyar, where *ír* means 'he writes,' and *ír-at*, 'he makes to write.' Thirdly, in an inflectional language the causation may be expressed by a mere symbol, whose original elements are too obliterated for separate usage, as in the  $\theta\eta$ , which is a sign in Greek of the first aorist passive, and which is derived from the roots of  $\tau\iota\theta\eta\mu\iota$  and  $\iota\eta\mu\iota$ , 'a making to go;' and this symbol may be so wholly absorbed into the word, and mixed up with its root, that as in the English 'sit,' 'seat,' no trace may be left of its original existence but the alteration of a vowel. It is difficult to give any absolutely accurate definition of flexion, although it is not difficult to pronounce whether a language does or does not belong to the inflectional class; but the essential peculiarity of a flexional language is this, that for the purposes of declension and conjugation it makes use of formative elements so purely conventional and mechanical, that the nature of its construction is not even suspected by nine-tenths of those who use it.



some rough and general conception of the structure that prevails among them. But I must repeat my warning, that the very rude and imperfect table before you is in no sense to be compared with those of the Aryan and Semitic languages; it is even in this broadest and roughest outline very uncertain; notes of interrogation might reasonably be interspersed among many of the names; it represents a comparatively imperfect knowledge even among the scholars who have studied it most; it does not pretend to indicate any *affiliation* between these languages, or any genetic connection, even the remotest, between the different groups. A few minutes' examination of it will show you that owing to our uncertainty many remarkable languages (Japanese, for instance, and Australian) are 'conspicuous by their absence,' and that in two memorable instances—Africa and America—the countless mutually-unintelligible tongues of immense continents are only represented by a single word.

1. As a specimen of what a monosyllabic language is like, I will of course take Chinese, a language so full of remarkable and deeply-interesting peculiarities that it might well fill a lecture by itself. Two words will admirably characterise both the Chinese language and the Chinese civilisation—I mean the words 'arrested development.' Up to a certain point the Chinese are astonishing; at that point they become ridiculous. They invented writing, but it stopped at hieroglyphics and ideography; they elaborated a kind of art, but it had no perspective and no ideality; they have a religion, but it is destitute of enthusiasm; a literature, but it has no warmth; an administration, but it has no elasticity and no life. They were acquainted with gunpowder, but it ended in fireworks; they discovered the compass, but used it only as a plaything; they invented printing, but never got to movable types. Nor is it different with their language. It looks like a language suddenly petrified at the very commencement of its career. It has thirty-six consonants, but among them no sounds so characteristic as *b*, *d*, *r*, and *z*. Nor can the Chinese pronounce two consonants with one

emission of the breath, but are compelled, for instance, to say 'Wikitolia' for 'Victoria,' 'Fan-lan-mo' for 'Brahma,' 'Inkili' for 'English,' and 'Kilisutu' for 'Christ.' Unlike any other language of which we are aware, Chinese is an *inorganic* language. It has no grammar and no words. It has no grammar, for grammar consists in *accidence*, syntax, and analysis, and *accidence* is impossible where there is not the shadow of an inflection for case or tense; *syntax* is impossible where there are no such things as parts of speech; *analysis* is impossible where every word is a simple and unaltered monosyllable.<sup>1</sup> It is quite amusing to look at a treatise like Mr. Wade's '*Tzu Erh Chi*, or Progressive Exercises in Chinese,' and to observe the shifts to which he is put, the cumbrous and curious periphrases with which he is obliged to be content, to furnish even a remote analogue for such common expressions as 'case' and 'tense.' The difficulties of this kind are insuperable, and a Chinese grammar cannot, by any conceivable process, be fused into the moulds of our Aryan logic. Now it may sound sensational to add that Chinese has no words; but, strange as it may appear, it is strictly and literally true. What are called its words are in fact *roots*; in one aspect they are roots *only*; in another they are *sentences*, in another they are mere *relative sounds*, which mean anything or nothing, except in particular connections, and with particular intonations; but, as Steinthal has pointed out, they are always either *more*

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<sup>1</sup> Hence the so-called native Chinese grammars are mainly lexicographic; and grammar (which mainly concerns the written language) becomes a kind of rhetoric. In one of these books grammar is defined as an art which teaches us to distinguish the *chi-tseu*, or 'full words,' from the *hiu-tseu*, or 'empty words,' i.e. the words which mainly mark relationships. They further distinguished between the *ho-tseu*, or 'living words,' and the *sse-tseu*, or 'dead words,' the former expressing actions or conditions (verbs), and the latter naming or qualifying objects (nouns and adjectives).—Bazin, *Gram. mand.* xxiv. Some of our proverbs and telegrams will give a notion of Chinese sentences. 'If there be no faith in our words, of what use are they?' becomes in Chinese, 'Words and no faith, words what use?'—Davis, *Chinese Maxims*, p. 18.

or *less* than actual words. They are in fact like the fragments of a mosaic—ugly and meaningless, unless seen in their proper position. As far as they are *written* they may constitute words, but as far as they are *spoken* they are mere syllables which connote nothing at all. I cannot illustrate this assertion more simply than by the fact that Chinese has only some 450 sounds, and yet has upwards of 40,000 ideographic signs to represent these sounds. Take, for instance, such a syllable as *ta*; not only is it any and every part of speech,<sup>1</sup> so that without the slightest change even in pronunciation, it may happen to mean either *great*, *greatness*, *greatly*, to *become great*, or to *make great*; but also it has, as every Chinese syllable has, four or five wholly different intonations,<sup>2</sup> each intonation producing a different meaning, and each meaning being so vague that one sound seems to stand very often for twenty different things. It would be absurd therefore to call *ta* a word. If in English I say ‘air,’ I may mean the atmosphere, or the poetical adverb ‘ere,’ or the point of Ayr in the Isle of Man, or the contraction of ‘ever,’ or Governor Eyre, or the ‘heir’ of an estate; or, if I happen to be in the habit of dropping my h’s I may mean what Punch’s hairdresser calls ‘the ‘air of the ‘ed;’ and so far the mere sound ‘air’ by itself can hardly be called a word. But in English these homonyms are the rare exception; in Chinese they are the universal rule, and hence we find such oddities of language as *ba bà bâ bá*, which is said to mean in Annam ‘three ladies gave the favourite of the prince a box on the ear;’ or, to borrow an instance from M. Abel de Rémusat, *Fu tschi tschi tschi tschi lu*, ‘he did not know the way to go by,’ literally, ‘not know to pass-over it

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<sup>1</sup> This is a characteristic of languages in an early stage, and hence too of languages which are going through a re-formative process, e.g. English in the reign of Elizabeth, ‘in which almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech.’—Abbott, *Shaksp. Gram.* i.

<sup>2</sup> This again is a characteristic of primitive and savage tongues. Annamese, for instance, with its six intonations, has been compared to ‘a perpetual chant.’

of it.'<sup>1</sup> The result of all this chaos, however, is less chaotic than might be supposed; it is reduced to order and meaning, partly by tone of voice and contrast, and partly by what may be called *tautologism*, i.e. by using a *second* synonym to define the word which is vague; in point of fact, by making two vague words into one definite word.<sup>2</sup> Thus in the Karen dialect, for instance, *la* means both *moon* and *leaf*; but, to avoid confusion, when it means 'moon,' *mo*, the word for *sun*, is added to it, and when it means 'leaf' *thé* is added; so that *la-mo* means 'moon,' and *la-thé* means 'leaf.' Again, supposing that a Chinese wants to express the word 'actions,' not having any distinction between noun and verb, he might say *hing*, which means *to do*: but besides this meaning, *hing* also means 'to walk,' 'to punish,' 'fortunate,' &c.; again, he might use the word *wei*, which means *to do*, but *wei* also means 'to become,' 'dignity,' &c. But when they are united into one word, *hing-wei*, then we must take the meaning common to both, and 'make-do' = 'action; ' while as for the plural, we either leave it unexpressed, or prefix to the expression some word meaning a crowd. Yet, in spite of the expedients of intonation, tautologism, context, and gesture, a Chinese in speaking often fails to make his meaning plain. He can then, however, have recourse to the infallible expedient of *writing* what he means. The 40,000 ideographic signs of Chinese, partly representative, partly syllabic, are so managed as to render everything wonderfully clear, and to give a pictorial representation of the pedigree of nearly every word. In point of fact the history of the Chinese language is only explicable

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<sup>1</sup> Ab. de Rémusat, *Élém. de la gram. chin.* p. 78; cf. Bazin, *Gram. mand.* xiv.: 'Le caractère Z est pris dans le premier cas comme verbe, dans le second comme pronom de la troisième personne à l'accusatif, et dans le troisième comme marque des rapports entre l'action de ce verbe et le substantif qui suit.'

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in the *written* language *kin* means cap, axe, gold, now, &c., but in the *spoken*, *mao-tseu* is cap, *fou-tseu* is axe, *hoang-kin*, gold, *jou-kin*, now, &c.—Bazin, *Gram. mand.* v.

in connection with its written system. The reason why these monosyllables have kept their meaning is because of the ideographic signs attached to them. 'The pencil of the scribe is incessantly divorcing the combinations of the speaker, and preserving for future ages the primitive monads of the language in their original and immemorial integrity.' They in fact account for the stationariness of the language, and perhaps preserve for us, 'like mummies in their ceremonies, vocables which may have issued from antediluvian lips.' For this reason, the study of Chinese promises most memorable results. It differs from other languages as much as if it were spoken by the inhabitants of another planet. In this language, which, like the attempts of young children, is eminently monosyllabic and interjectional, we see, if anywhere, a picture of human speech in its primitive inadequacy. 'While all other tongues, in floating down the stream of time, have undergone perpetual commixture and change, this alone has resisted the mighty *débâcle*, bringing to us in its rigid and frozen masses the fresh but strange and bizarre elements of a primitive language and an infant civilisation.'<sup>1</sup>

As another specimen of an isolating language, let me take the dialect of the Khasias, tribes of the hill-range which separates Eastern Bengal from Assam. In some respects as a linguistic type it may be regarded as a step higher than the Chinese, inasmuch as its words are real words, and the meaning is evolved from the simple juxtaposition, without the need of context or intonation. In Khasia, very often a word is a sentence. Thus *bam* means *eat*, and to get the word 'food,' we have *ka jing bam*—*ka* being the feminine article, and *jing* meaning 'thing,' and marking a substantive; so that *the-thing-eat* = food. Hence a vast number of their words begin with *ka jing*, and in a Khasia dictionary *k* is by far the most voluminous letter. Another peculiarity

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<sup>1</sup> Laidly *On the Karen Dialects*, p. 10.

in an isolating language is the necessity of putting half-a-dozen words for one thing, as though to get nearer and nearer at its essence by an agglomeration of its attributes. In Aryan languages *one* quality or attribute of a thing is sufficient to furnish its name—in Sanskrit, for instance, the name of a bear may be derived from its shining fur, of a lion from its hairy mane (*kesin*), of an elephant from its bright ivory (*ibha*) or its drinking twice (*dvipa*), or from its tusks, (*dantin*, *dvirada*), or from its having a hand (*hastin*, *karenu*), or from its having a serpent for a nose—but in savage languages there is often an attempt to heap up *all* the attributes of a thing together, and so make of them a single word—as when in Mexican a goat was called *head-tree lip-hair*, i.e. the horned and bearded.

‘Reflection’ in Khasia is *jing kyrtot phalang kynduh jingurut*; and ‘distinct’ is graphically expressed by *ba ha la ka jong ka jong*, and ‘invalid’ by *u ba la pyntlot da ka jing pang*; where *u* is the masculine article, *ba* is a relative here used as a sign of the participle, *la* is a *possessive* indicating the past, *pyn* represents causality, *ka jing* are ‘the thing,’ and *pang* is ‘ill:’ what *tlot* and *da* mean my vocabulary does not tell me; so that ‘invalid’ means, ‘the which its cause? the thing ill.’ Is it not obvious at a glance that a people whose language has not attained any further development than this, but is still, like an asymptote, indefinitely distant from the circumference, must belong to a lower stratum than the Aryan who conquered him? Is it not clear that in such a language as this, all literary culture, all refined expression, all elevated teaching, are impossible? Yet both the Hindoos and we have suffered terribly, and still are suffering most seriously, for our neglect and contempt of these primitive populations. To this day it is a sign of the power of these aboriginal races, that, in order to secure their allegiance, some of the haughtiest Hindoo rajahs must on the day of their coronation completely waive the notion of caste, and actually submit to have their foreheads

marked by one of these detested aliens with a round spot of warm aboriginal blood drawn from the toe of another.<sup>1</sup> We, after having suffered for years from raids and devastations of Booteahs, and Sonthals, and Khasias, and Goorkas, irritated by our own ignorance and neglect, are at last beginning to discover that these despised and neglected tribes are remarkable for truth and manliness, and are capable of making faithful soldiers, peaceful subjects, and brave allies. We shall be verily guilty concerning our unfortunate brother, if any longer we see the anguish of his soul when he beseeches us and we will not hear.

2. The next class of languages to which I wish to call your attention may be specialised as the *agglutinating*. The peculiarity described by the term agglutination is one of the widest and vaguest character. Some agglutinating languages almost sink into the isolating class; others almost rise to the inflectional.<sup>2</sup> Agglutination may be described as that principle of linguistic structure which consists in the mere placing of unaltered roots side by side; as when to express

<sup>1</sup> See Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal*, 'Dissertation on the Non-Aryan Dialects of India,' p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The characteristics that make it necessary to place such a language as the Suomi or Finnish under the agglutinating rather than under the inflectional class, are not very distinctly explicable, and yet are very real. Finnish has many cases—more even than the Sanskrit—viz. (as named by Rask), the infinitive, genitive, inessive, elative, illative, adessive, ablative, allative, abessive, prolative, translative, essive, comitative, and instructive. Yet among them all it has no very distinct nominative or accusative. The infinitive case is simply our nominative with the indefinite article. Then again, every really inflectional language possesses, besides its inflections, certain words (such as prepositions) which express mere relations, and which are used as in Greek to give greater definiteness to the inflections themselves. The most genuine prepositions are not those which may be derived from verbs or nouns, but those which have a pronominal origin, and such prepositions are entirely wanting in Finnish. Again, the structure of sentences in Finnish is clumsy and deficient in style. I take some of these facts from a letter written to me by R. Cull, Esq. F.S.A., one of the very few English scholars who has any acquaintance with the Suomi. See too Steinthal, *Charakt. der haupts. Typen des Sprachbaues*, p. 329.

'discipline' the Chinese say 'law-soldier,' or for 'treasury,' 'room-silver,' or for 'elders,' 'father-mother,' or for 'enjoyment,' 'luxury-play-food-clothes.' This very simple method of getting new meanings by the mere juxtaposition of words, the main word being put first, and the other words following, reigns throughout immense kingdoms of speech. Such words as the Turkish of *sev-isch-der-il-me-mek*, 'they could not be brought to love one another;' where *sev* means *love* and each of the following syllables has its separate and separable meaning: and as the Hungarian *var-at-andot-ta-tok*, 'you will have been waited for;' where *var* means 'wait,' *andot*, 'will,' *ta* 'have,' *tok*, 'you,' and *at* is a conjunction, —will illustrate this structure. These are *parathetic* compounds, i.e. there is only a juxtaposition not a fusion, only a mechanical not a chemical union between their parts; and it will be seen at a glance how different they are from such synthetic forms as *λελύσονται*, which in Greek means 'would that they might have been loosed;' or *ἐτετιμήμεθα*, 'we had been honoured,' where, although the words can be analysed into their constituent elements, yet not one of these elements has any meaning or any existence apart from the compound word itself.

In fact, we may say that the union in a synthetic compound is like the union of oxygen and hydrogen in water, where the separate individuality of the component parts is obliterated and undistinguishable; but a parathetic compound is like water and oil lying one on the other, unmingled, in the same vessel. Who, for instance, in the synthetic compound 'which' would ever recognise the two words who-like? and in such a parathetic compound as house-top or sister-in-law, there is a mere mechanical junction of independent and distinguishable words. Now this kind of agglutination, in some degree or other, is a characteristic of three-fourths of the languages of the globe. To say, therefore, that a language is agglutinative is to throw but little light on its specific structure.

A simple and symmetrical, but much more precise,

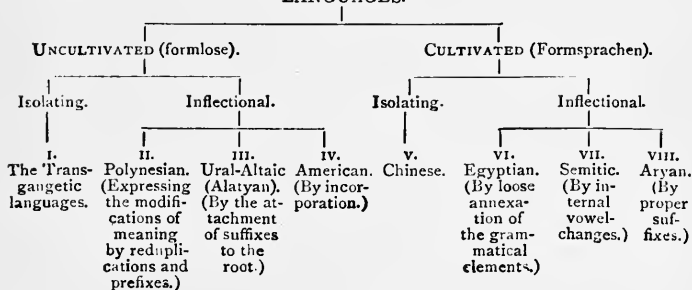


classification of languages has been elaborately established by Professor Steinthal in his *Charakteristik der hauptsächlichsten Typen des Sprachbaues*. He would divide them all into two great classes, viz. culture-languages and uncultivated languages, and each of these he would divide into two classes, viz. the isolating and the inflecting.<sup>1</sup> Taking the uncultivated first: under the isolating class he would place the Transgangetic; and under the inflecting he would place three divisions: 1. The Polynesian, which expresses all the minor modifications of the meaning, all distinctions of declension and conjugation, by reduplications and prefixes. 2. The Ural-Altic (here called the Alatyian), which expresses them by annexing separate words after the root in the manner we have seen; and 3. The American, which expresses them by amalgamation, in a way which we shall explain immediately. The cultivated languages are similarly divided—1. Into the isolating, here represented by Chinese; 2. Into the inflectional, under which head he places—i. The Egyptian, which achieves a sort of inflection by a loose addition of grammatical elements. ii. The Semitic, by internal modification of the root; and iii. The Aryan, throughout which the formal elements have been reduced to mere conventional suffixes, such, for instance, as the letter *s*, which is our all but universal sign for the plural number.

This classification of Professor Steinthal's has considerable

<sup>1</sup> The table may be expressed as follows:—

LANGUAGES.



advantages over the ordinary genetic and morphological classifications, because it takes into account the psychological distinctions between languages no less than their grammatical structure. Chinese, for instance, by its unorganic and unsyntactic character, is generally placed at the very bottom of the linguistic scale, and is classed with such languages as that of Burmah. Finnish and Hungarian, on the other hand, are so rich in declensions and conjugations that some philologists (e.g. Schwartze and Europæus) have been inclined to remove them from the agglutinating division and from the Ural-Altaic family, and class them with the Aryan languages.<sup>1</sup> This was clearly an error, although it is more than doubtful whether the conjugation of these languages has not been enriched and modified by Aryan influences, and whether they do not furnish a proof that there may be a certain duality in the grammatical conceptions of any nation ; i.e. a mixture of conflicting elements. However this may be, it is certain that, in point of literary importance and cultivation, Chinese has far more right to stand on a line with Sanskrit than Hungarian, or even than Finnish, and far more right than Egyptian has to stand on a line with Hebrew. The 'Shy-king' is quite as important as the 'Kalewala,' and the works of Confucius and Meng-tseu are worth any number of obelisks and pyramids. And, accordingly, in the accompanying table Chinese stands in a more elevated position ; it was in some respects a clumsier language than those which stand below it, but it has been far more carefully handled, and has produced far superior results.

In all the languages of the uncultivated or formless class there is no complete and adequate distinction between the

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<sup>1</sup> See an interesting little tract, *Ueber den Urstamm der indoeur. Sprachfam. und seine vor-indoeuropäischen Abzweigungen, namentlich die finnisch-ungarische*, by D. E. D. Europæus, Helsingfors, 1863. He argues very earnestly in favour of the primitive Aryan affinities of Finnish, and mentions some facts about the Finns which certainly place them very high among Alatyan races.

material and formal elements ; i.e. between roots and inflections, between the words which express objects and those which express relations. Chinese is free from this confusion, as it possesses material elements only, and either leaves all formal relations unexpressed, or indicates them by means of position and other rhetorical considerations. Hebrew, with its vowel-less roots, which require vocalisation before they can attain any meaning whatever, stands morphologically at the very opposite linguistic pole.<sup>1</sup> The Aryan and Semitic languages alone have elaborated a philosophical grammar by a system of inflections at once absolutely conventional and perfectly accurate. But the Semitic are far less flexible, less finely articulated, than the Aryan, less capable of arranging the clauses of a sentence in their due connection and subordination. Hence, though admirably adapted for the interjectional style of impassioned poetry, they have never been able to attain the *λέξις κατεστραμμένη*, the continuous period and flowing rhythm of Aryan prose.

3. You will see in the table that a whole class of languages are put by themselves as polysynthetic. The word implies all those languages which not only, like the Aryan and other languages, combine into single words the minor modifications of each main verbal or nominal conception, but which make whole clauses and even whole sentences into single words, compressed together in such a violent condition of fusion and apocope, that often no single syllable in the sentence would be capable of separate use. A few instances will best illustrate what is meant. Thus in Mexican *nicalchihua* means 'I build my house ;' but the

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<sup>1</sup> In Chinese a sound, though it requires tautologism or position in the sentence to give it meaning, is not further susceptible of any alteration whatever. It is at once a root, and a sound capable of meaning ; but in Hebrew the roots as such are merely consonantal, and therefore even unpronounceable. They are like the moulded clay into which the vowels breathe the Promethean fire of a living signification.

words are so imbricated together that neither *ni*, 'I,' nor *cal*, 'house,' nor *chihua*, 'make,' can be employed as separate words. Again *achichillacachocan* means 'the place where people weep because the water is red;' but the *separate* words are all clipped and altered in this compound, being *alt*, 'water,' *chichiltic*, 'red,' *tlacatl*, 'man,' and *chorea*, 'weep.' In fact the sentences are formed by a sort of *incapsulation*, and may be compared to those boxes shut up one within another which afford so much amusement to children;—or to those cryptogamic plants which, though they form an indivisible whole, have no vital centres or apparent functions. Three names—all of them good and descriptive—have been proposed, to represent this process, viz.: *polysynthesis*, or the synthesis of many words into one—*holophrasis*, the reduction of whole sentences into words—and *incorporation*. It characterises, so far as we know, every language from Greenland to Cape Horn, with the single exception of one monosyllabic dialect, the Othomi. Three characteristics of these languages, all resulting from this peculiarity of structure, may here be mentioned, viz.: their rapid evanescence, their alliterative structure, and the immeasurable length of their polysyllables. As an instance of their *rapid divergence* we may mention the facts that, after a very short separation, two families of a tribe will become mutually unintelligible, and that books prepared by missionaries with infinite labour in one generation may become useless in the next. As an instance of their *alliterative* character, which is common to most savage and undeveloped languages, I will only mention that while it is curious and ingenious, and gives an intricately-woven harmony of vowels and consonants to the utterance, it is perfectly useless for linguistic purposes, and furnishes an immense stumbling-block in the way of acquiring these tongues. As specimens of these polysyllables I need only adduce such words as *shakoorooceshairet* for 'day' in Pawnee, and *khotsiakatathusin* for 'tooth' in Tlatskanai. The word for 'tongue' being too frightful for pronunciation I

have relegated it to a note.<sup>1</sup> These are indeed vocables which, as De Quincey observes, would be enough 'to splinter the teeth of a crocodile;' but Mexican seems to beat them in the bizarrerie of its sounds. In Mexican, e.g. the common address to a priest is the one word *Notlazoma-hiuzteopixcatatzin*, which means, 'Venerable priest, whom I honour as a father.' A fagot is *tlatlaltalpistiteutli*, and if the fagot were of green wood it could hardly make a greater splutter even in the fire. In the same language a lover would have had to say 'I love you' in the form *ni-mits-tsikāwakā-tlasolta*, and instead of a kiss he would have had to ask for a *tetenna-miquilitzli*. 'Dieu merci,' exclaims the French writer from whom I quote this fact, 'quand on a prononcé le mot on a bien mérité la chose.'<sup>2</sup>

I must not mention these amalgamating languages without calling your attention to the fact that one of the very few isolated languages of Europe exhibits, strange to say, the only cis-Atlantic instance of this very peculiar structure. It is the Eskura or Basque, spoken in the valleys of the Pyrenees, on the borders of France and Spain in an angle of the Bay of Biscay. The ethnological and linguistic affinities of this language, though repeatedly inquired into, have never yet been satisfactorily ascertained. Its existence there remains at present an insoluble problem; but what is certain about it is that its structure is polysynthetic, like the languages of America. Like them, and them only, it habitually forms its compounds by the elimination of certain radicals in the simple words; so that, e.g. *ilhun*, twilight, is contracted from *hill*, dead, and *egun*, day; and *belhaun*, the knee, from *belhar*, front, and *oin*, leg. It was this fact that made Larramendi give to his treatise on Basque

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<sup>1</sup> 'Tongue' in Tlatskanai, an Athabaskan language, is *khotzotkhl-tzitzkhltsaha*. 'Star' in Chenook is *tkhlkhekkhanama*.

<sup>2</sup> It should be observed that to a language with such long words polysynthetism becomes an inevitable necessity: no compounds in such a language would be *possible* if they were not permitted to clip the composing elements into manageable shape.

grammar the title of 'The Impossible Overcome.'<sup>1</sup> The most daring of all the hypotheses which have been suggested points to the conceivable existence of some great Atlantis—to the possibility of the 'Basque area being the remains of a vast system, of which Madeira and the Azores are fragments, belonging to the Miocene period.' Be this as it may, the fact is indisputable, and is eminently noteworthy, that, while the affinities of the Basque roots have never been conclusively elucidated, there has never been any doubt that this isolated language, preserving its identity in a western corner of Europe between two mighty kingdoms, resembles in its grammatical structure the aboriginal languages of the vast opposite continent, and those alone.

Before leaving this great realm of Sporadic languages, I should like to make a few remarks about the most prominent peculiarities by which uncultivated languages in general, and especially those of savages, and those absolutely destitute of literature, are characterised. And, first of all, I would point out an error which, until very lately, was widely prevalent. It has been repeatedly argued that the languages of the American Indians, the Kafirs, Hottentots, and many such nations, are so elaborate, contain such a bewildering number of conjugations and declensions, are dominated by such delicate and ever-varying laws of harmonic sequence, that they can only be regarded as the decaying fragments of nobler formations. It is maintained that if, as Charlevoix remarks, the Huron presents 'a beautiful union of energy and nobleness,'—if, as Du Porceau says, there is real genius in the infinite variety and yet perfect regularity which these American languages display, —if Appleyard be correct in calling the South African languages 'highly systematic and truly philosophical,'—then forms of speech like theirs could not have been developed by tribes which were always illiterate and savage. I must confess to being entirely sceptical, both as to the

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<sup>1</sup> *El imposible vencido*, 1723.

premisses and the conclusion. People are apt to show an exaggerated partiality for any language, and particularly for any very difficult language, which with intense infinite toil they have been able to master; and when they lay bare before us the outline of what they so greatly admire, we generally find that some allowance must be made for the rapture of discovery. Now these expressions of enthusiasm for savage languages generally reduce themselves to a eulogy on three characteristics—viz. their *elaborateness*, their *exuberance*, and their semi-rhythmic *euphony*; and I think that a very little examination will show these peculiarities to be defects rather than merits. Their *elaborateness*, for instance, is found to be mainly due to a childish excess of definiteness which delights in incessant repetitions of one leading syllable, or in repeated reference to one noun. For instance, a Cree Indian, if he wants to say, ‘I see his son,’ says, instead, an imposingly long and apparently elaborate word, which, however, simply means literally, ‘He-his-son-I-see-him-his,’<sup>1</sup> where the accusative is three times and the possessive is twice repeated in the briefest compass; and similarly in Mexican, ‘I give my son the bread’ is ‘I-it-him-give the bread my son.’ The savage, like some civilised people, thinks he is all the finer if he has an inordinately long name, but we must not imitate him by thinking languages are a bit the better for being composed of long words. For instance, in these vaunted Kafir languages the repetition of syllables—one leading syllable thrusting itself with the most obtrusive tautology through a whole sentence—is even more childish than this persistence on the main idea. I find from a grammar by Dr. Bleek, that if a Zulu wants to say, ‘Our fine nation appears, we love it,’ he repeats *si*, which is the leading syllable in *I-si-zwe*, ‘nation,’ no less than five times, exactly as if we should express it by saying, ‘our-na-nation na-fine na-appears, we-

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<sup>1</sup> See Whitney, *Lectures*, p. 349; Schleicher, *Die Deutsche Sprache*, p. 18. Steinthal gives similar specimens in Jakutisch, a Tatar language (*Charakteristik*, p. 193).

*na*-love the *na*,' or, to take the instance he himself gives, to say in Zulu, 'our large steamer is in sight, we love it,' one would have to say, 'the steamer, our *er*, which *er* is a great *er*, the *er* appears, we love the *er*.' Surely after such specimens, however systematic these languages may be, the less we talk with Mr. Appleyard about their being 'truly philosophic,' the better. Nor is the case improved if we turn to their *exuberance*, or dwell, as again Mr. Appleyard does, on there being in Kafir a hundred different forms for the word 'its.' This vaunted wealth, on a little examination, turns out to be a mere concealment for poverty. It is due to that utter—and what appears to us to be that almost imbecile—deficiency of abstraction which is one of the most remarkable facts about savage tongues. A savage may have a dozen verbs for 'I am here,' 'I am well,' 'I am tall,' 'I am hungry,' &c., because he has no word for 'am ;' so that the missionary Elliot was obliged to render, 'I Am that I am,' by 'I do, I do ;' and a dozen words for 'my head,' 'your head,' 'his head,' and almost any conceivable person's head, because he finds a difficulty in realising the mere conception of any head apart from its owner. A Cherokee will have twenty verbs meaning 'I wash my face,' 'I wash my hands,' 'I wash your face,' 'I wash some one else's hands,' and so on ; because he can't get at the abstract conception 'I wash ;' and words for 'I fish with a stick,' 'I fish with a string,' 'I fish for minnows,' 'I fish for sturgeon,' &c., but no word for 'I fish.' Once more, the endless euphonic changes arise from exactly the same fondness for assonance apart from meaning, that makes a Hindoo servant tell his mistress that he has 'put the *kettley-bittley*' on the fire, or 'sewn the button-bitten on the coat ;' or that makes nursemaids instinctively believe that it is pleasing to children to be told that 'Georgie-porgie has had a nice walky-palky.' It would, in short, be easy to show, in the most convincing manner, that the condition of these languages, so far from being a proof of primordial civilisation, is, on the contrary, rather a pledge of permanent undevelop-



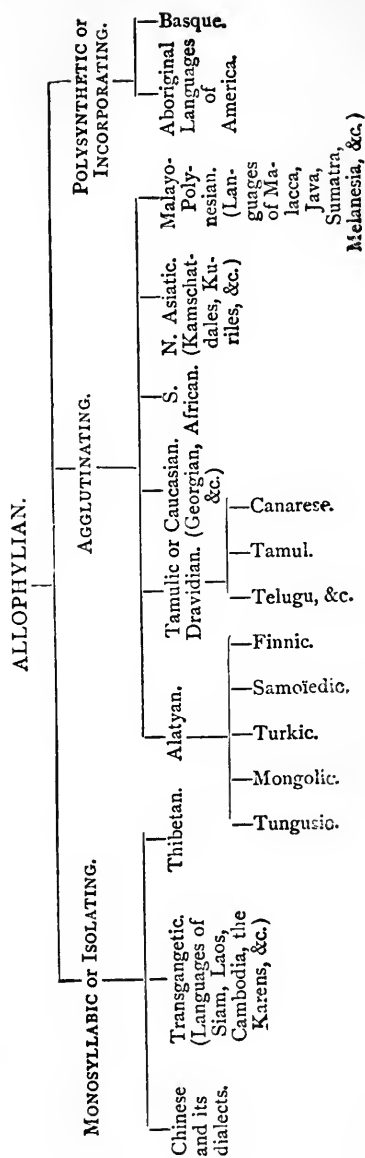
ment. They are the work of minds which have nothing else to occupy their energies, and therefore follow in one single direction an erroneous and partial line of development. Unless Polytheism be more intellectual than Monotheism; unless the 40,000 signs of Chinese ideography are preferable to the 26 letters of the Aryan alphabet; unless it be more sensible to calculate the time by algebra or measure the height of a table by trigonometry rather than look at a clock or use a footrule—then all this polysynthetism, alliteration, and exuberance is a sign rather of inferiority than of culture. But, in point of fact, ease and not difficulty, brevity and not periphrasis, simplicity and not complexity, is the triumph of civilisation; and a cumbersome linguistic machinery is worse than useless when it is possible to achieve the same ends far more effectually by the very simplest means.

In speaking of various Allophylian races I have several times used the word 'inferiority;' and without the aid of either philology or ethnology it might well appear a self-evident fact that some races of men *are* inferior to others. If, for instance, all the nations who speak these Allophylian and Sporadic languages were swept away to-morrow from the face of the earth—vast as would be the numerical lacuna which they would leave among the 1,000,000,000 of living men—they would, with the exception of the Chinese, leave scarcely a single trace behind them in the religion, the history, the literature, or the civilisation of mankind. It is true that there have been epochs when men of these races burst from their uncivilised confines, and under leaders like Attila, and Timour, and Zenghis Khan flooded the civilised world with their deluges of barbarism; but as a rule even their deeds of destruction have had but little permanence, and have left but a transitory impression. And even in historic periods not a few of these Sporadic peoples have utterly passed away. The Carib has disappeared from the West Indian islands; the Tasmanians from Van Diemen's Land; the Guanches from the Canaries; Maories are dying

out from New Zealand ; many tribes of the Americans, Australians, and other savages perish as surely before the advance of civilisation as does the line of snow, on which a shadow has lain, when the sunlight reaches it. There may be something melancholy in the thought ; but, ultimately considered, the disappearance of a race is merely the decease of an individual. And meanwhile it is a subject of hope and thanksgiving that each new phase of human existence has shown a nobler and nobler spectacle. Had the Chinese and the Egyptian never existed, the life of man would have been the life of the savage, without government, without inventions, without literature, without art, absorbed in procuring the means to satisfy his daily wants ; had neither of the civilised races—the Aryan and the Semitic—appeared, mankind would have been petrified under a crude, hard, tyrannous, unprogressive civilisation, not rising above the placid sensuality of China, or the Negritian cruelty of Egypt. Had the Aryan alone appeared, ‘the abysmal deeps of personality’ would never have been sounded, nor the beauty of holiness been fully known. Had the Semite alone appeared, man might have been sunk in Oriental stagnation—noble indeed in his moral bearings, but too simply quiescent and introspective—without science, without inventiveness, without inquiry, without intellectual breadth and catholicity, without that physical energy and those ‘wrestling thews’ that throw the world. It is to the result of their *combined* work—to the science and strength of the Aryan, inspired and ennobled by the religious thoughts which were revealed to the Semite—that the immediate future of the world belongs. The natural energy of the Aryan will be the instrument of his unceasing progress ; the faith which he has adopted should be the guarantee of his justice and of his charity. Other races, whether they be equal or inferior, he will still regard as the other sheep of his Redeemer, though they be not of this fold—he will still look upon them as intrusted to his keeping, as children with him of a common God, and heirs with him of a common immortality. And

then, if it be destined, as it *may* be destined, that he too, in his turn, should pass away to give place to a yet loftier and lovelier type of humanity, he will yet have done his work and will have earned his reward, and will be commemorated in the eternal annals of destiny as one who well fulfilled the highest purpose which can animate humanity—the physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual elevation of Humanity itself.

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